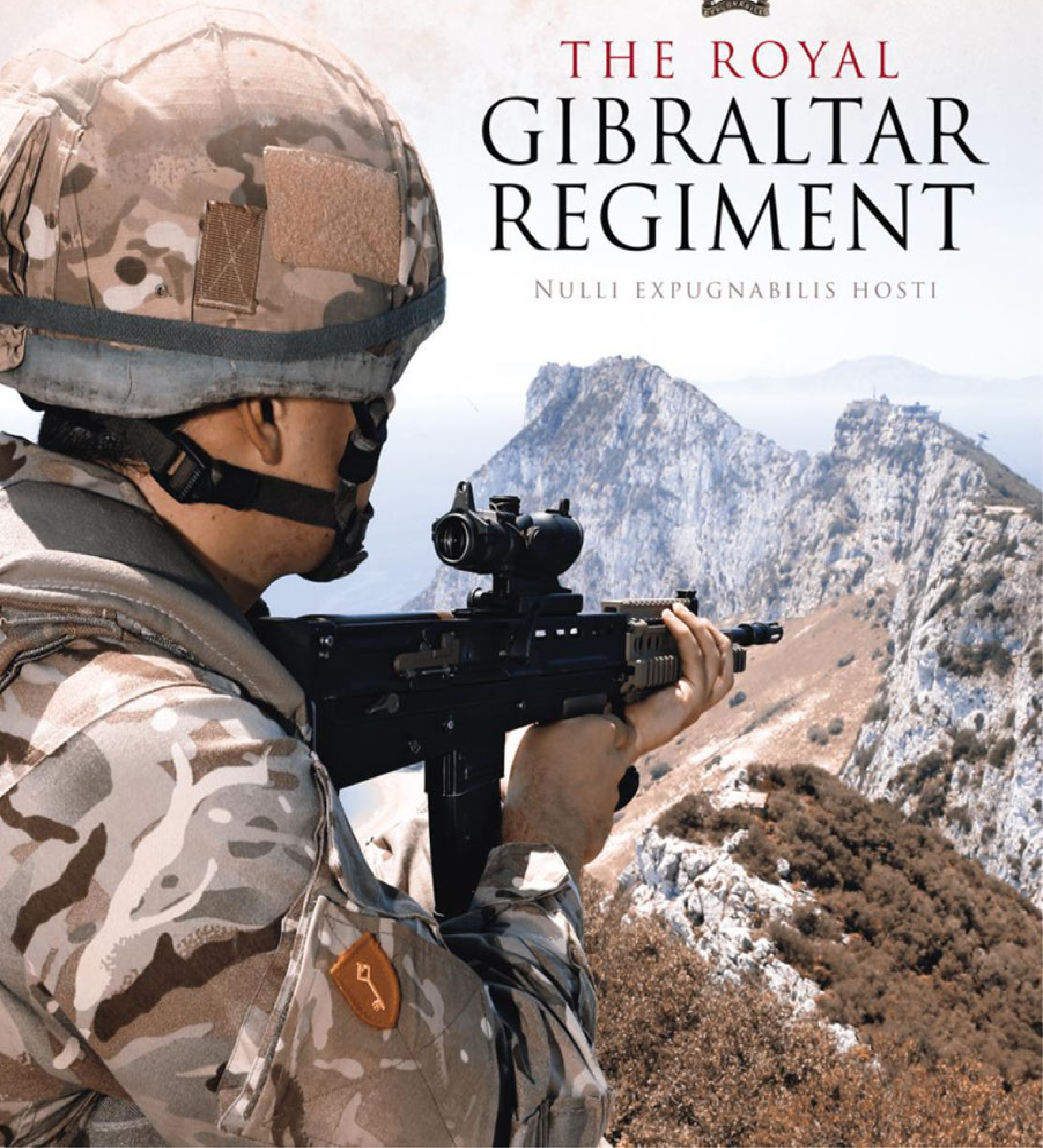
MATTHIAS STROHN

THE ROYAL GIBRALTAR REGIMENT

NULLI EXPUGNABILIS HOSTI



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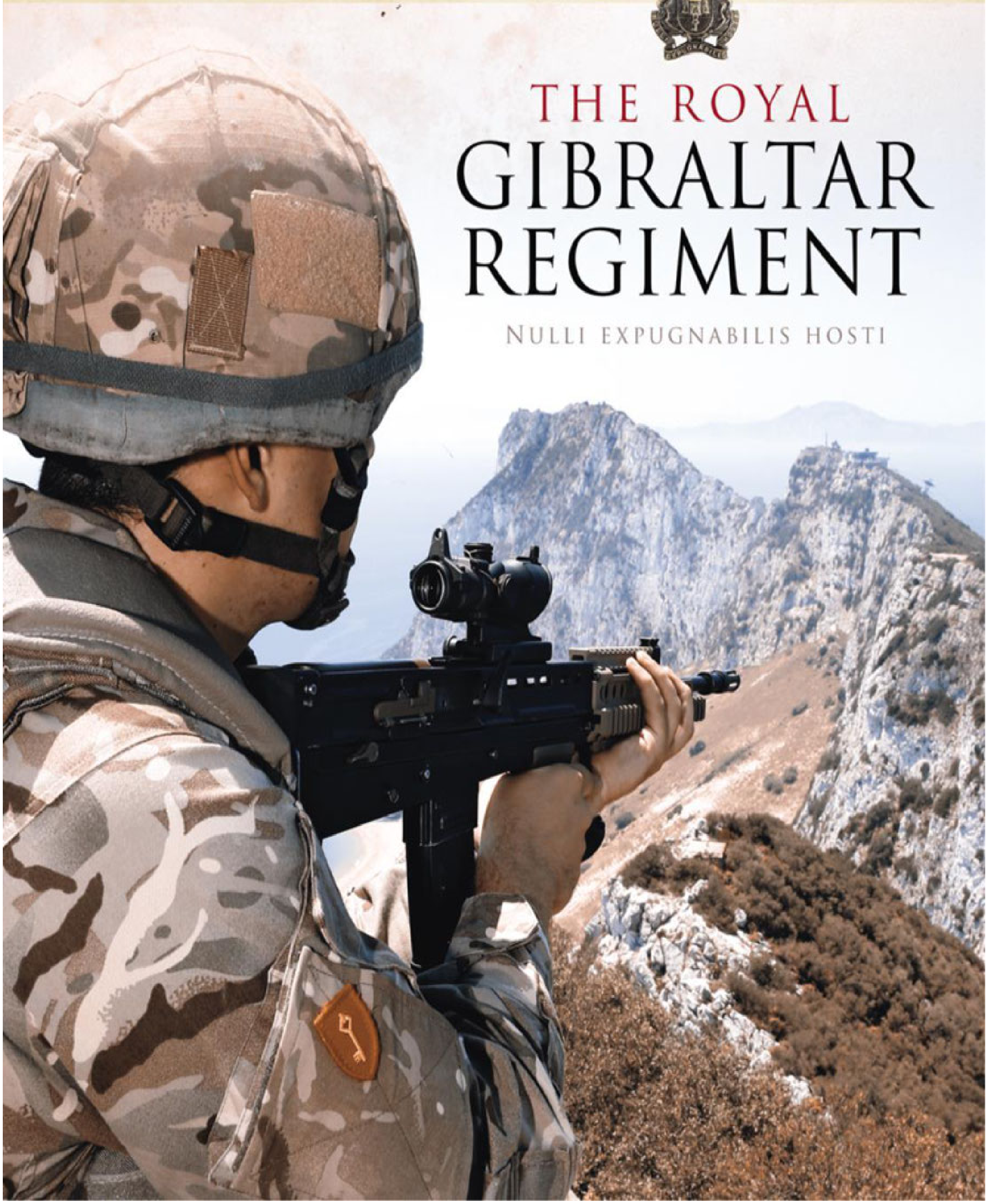

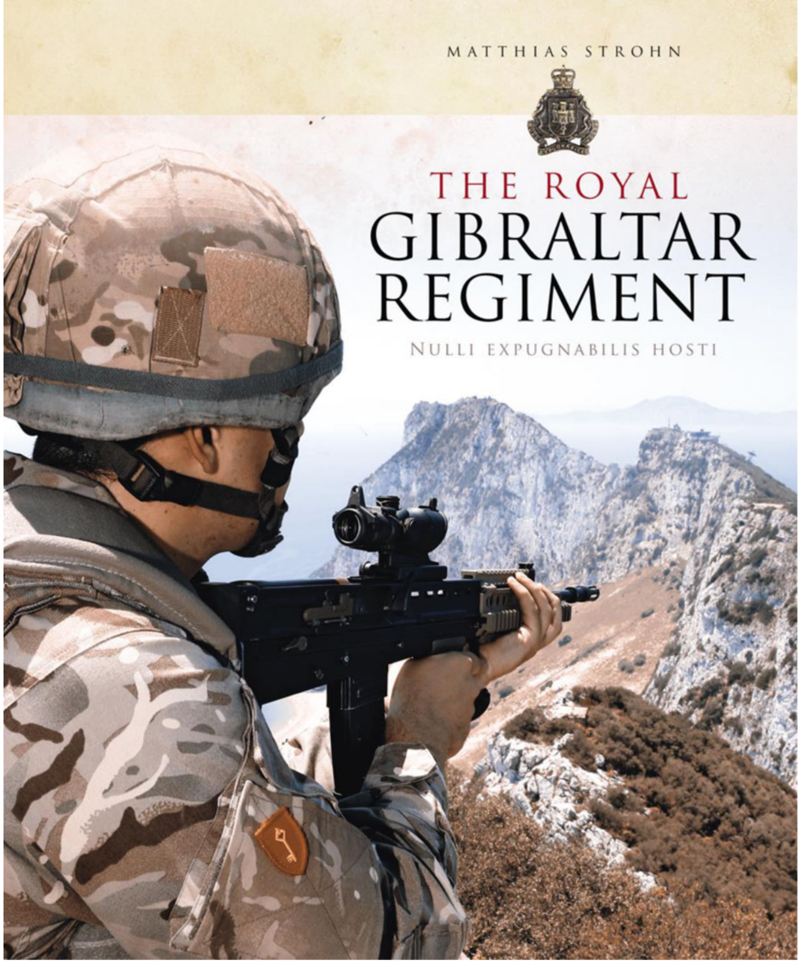

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Using material compiled by *Major (Retd) John D. Ritchie*

OSPREY
PUBLISHING

A TRIBUTE TO MAJOR (RETD) JOHN D. RITCHIE

John Ritchie's first contact with the Gibraltar Regiment was in January 1965 when he was called up with 60 other men to make up the 29th Military Service intake. He described the beginning of his military career with the following words:

I was probably not the most enthusiastic conscript at that time but, something must have 'clicked' in my mind because, after we all marched out at the end of our four months' training, I marched back to join the Permanent Cadre. The Gibraltar Regiment became my career and 'home' for the next 32 years.

Over these years, John Ritchie had a distinguished career. He rapidly rose through the ranks of the non-commissioned and warrant officer corps. A particular honour was the appointment to Port Sergeant at the Ceremony of the Keys in 1972. John was the first Gibraltarian and senior non-commissioned officer in the Regiment to perform this responsibility. Finally, in 1981, he became the Regimental Sergeant Major, a post he held until 1982.

For a man of John's calibre this was not the end. One of his colleagues described John as 'Sgt John Ritchie, who to me was the perfect soldier, I am not surprised he was later commissioned.' And so it happened. As an officer, he held several posts in the Regiment, amongst them that of company commander. He ended his career in 1997 with the rank of major and the position of Second-in-Command of the Regiment.

After his retirement he stayed in touch with the Regiment and tirelessly worked on a project that was very dear to him: a book of 'his' Regiment's history. Over several years and with a dedication seldom seen he compiled a wealth of information, facts and figures. All this found its way into a draft of the history of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment and its preceding formations. Sadly John died on 26 March 2012, before he had finished the book, and this task eventually went to me.

I would like to thank John for his work and also his wife Monica who willingly shared John's work and material with me. Without John's manuscript the finished book that you hold in your hands would have been of a much poorer quality. Isaac Newton once said that he was standing on the shoulders of giants and that only the work carried out by great men in the past enabled him to make his ground-breaking discoveries. In this project, I was standing on John Ritchie's shoulders.

So, to a large degree this really is John Ritchie's book. I hope he approves of it.

Matthias Strohn

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PREFACE

The Chief Minister visiting the Regiment on exercise in 2015.

BY THE CHIEF MINISTER OF GIBRALTAR

The history of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment and its predecessor formations is also the history of Gibraltar. The close links that have always existed between the Regiment and the people of Gibraltar make this Regiment a very special unit. In the past, the Regiment's character as a volunteer and conscript unit ensured that these links were established and maintained between the people of Gibraltar and the soldiers of the Regiment. The fact that today a large proportion of its professional soldiers and officers is still recruited from within Gibraltar is a strong indicator that this bond has remained unbroken over the years and has survived the many changes the Regiment has gone through.

This special relationship is reflected in the book. It is only right that the book goes back to the beginning of British rule in Gibraltar in the 18th century. There was no Royal Gibraltar Regiment at the time, but the enduring characteristics of the population of Gibraltar were already visible then: a love for the Rock and their allegiance to Britain.

These realities are obvious in all the chapters of the book. The formation of the Gibraltar Volunteer Corps in the First World War was based on the same enthusiasm as the establishment of the Gibraltar Defence Force in 1939, of which I am proud to say my late father was a part alongside so many other brave Gibraltarian men. Changes in name and form in the following years did not alter the underlying principle and unifying bond that also characterise the modern-day Royal Gibraltar Regiment and its identification with the Rock. In today's world, the Royal Gibraltar Regiment is an excellent and fitting ambassador for Gibraltar wherever the unit or individual men and women of this unit go. They are the bravest representation of our commitment to Gibraltar.

I am very happy that we now have a book that tells the story of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment and its heritage and that Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar was able to fund the project.

I wish the Royal Gibraltar Regiment all the best for the future.

Fabian Picardo

Chief Minister of Gibraltar

FOREWORD

BY LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR JAMES BENJAMIN DUTTON (FORMER GOVERNOR OF GIBRALTAR AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ROYAL GIBRALTAR REGIMENT 2013–15)

The Royal Gibraltar Regiment celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2014. I am very pleased that this book has been written to record the history of this astonishing military unit.

The Regiment has come a long way in 75 years and the journey is explained in this book. Officially, the Regiment traces its formation back to 1939 when the Gibraltar Defence Force was founded. But it would be short-sighted to omit the earlier days of the Gibraltarian contribution to the defence of the Rock and it is only fitting that this book takes us back to the days of the Great Siege at the end of the 18th century. It also records the Gibraltar Volunteer Force formed during the First World War in 1915: the Regiment has come far since the parades in civilian clothes that we can see in those pictures. Over the years, the character of the Regiment has changed markedly. The key events: the introduction and subsequent end of National Service; the changes to the order of battle; and the Regiment's developing roles from air defence to infantry, are described in the book. The underlying story is one of duty and devotion and the will to succeed. It is obvious that the Regiment has achieved this and will continue to do so. Many members of the Regiment have served with distinction in Afghanistan and Iraq, and at present, the Regiment is at the forefront of defence diplomacy. I doubt if any of the men shown parading in civilian clothes in 1915 would have dreamt of such things.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish the Regiment all the very best for the future and to congratulate and thank all members past and present for their performance and their devotion to Gibraltar and the Crown.

I know that HM the Queen and all Gibraltarians can rely on the Regiment in the future.

Lieutenant-General Sir James Benjamin Dutton

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A book such as this cannot be written without the support of many people. First and foremost, I would like to thank the Royal Gibraltar Regiment for their support throughout the process. I always felt a warm welcome when I went to the Rock and without the help of the entire Regiment this book would not have been produced. And let us not forget, this is the story of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment and the men that made the Regiment what it is today – I am merely recording what they have achieved.

I would like to thank the Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Regiment, Lieutenant-General Sir James Dutton, for his contribution to the book and his general support for the project.

From the start, the government of Gibraltar showed a keen interest in the project and supported the book throughout the production process. It is no exaggeration to say that without the support from the government this book would not have been produced. I would also like to thank the Chief Minister, the Honourable Fabian Picardo, for his personal interest and his contribution to the book.

The Regimental Council was a delight to work with and I was able to talk to and interview nearly all of its members. They all showed a keen interest in and support for the book, but they did not interfere in the writing process. That is not always the case in projects like this, so the fact that this book was enjoyable to write is due to no small part to the Council.

There are some members of the Regiment who really deserve to be thanked personally. The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Ivor Lopez, was the driving force behind the project from the start. He established the contact between myself and the Regiment, and he provided more support throughout the project than I could have hoped for. Major Ian Martinez, the Regiment's Quarter Master Technical, holds the regimental archives and he provided a large number of useful images, many of which have found their way into this book. I was particularly impressed by the fact that he

organized a photo shoot for the cover image. More images came from Major (Retd) John Navas who had spent many hours with Major (Retd) John Ritchie collating hundreds of photographs. Major Gerald Fitzgerald organized my trips to Gibraltar and ensured that everything went smoothly at all times. Captain John Pitto, the Adjutant, answered many questions and shared his detailed knowledge of the Regiment, without which the book would be of a poorer quality. He must have dreaded checking his email inbox at times, considering the number of emails I sent him.

Monica Ritchie shared with me all the material that her late husband had compiled over many years of hard work. This made my task so much easier. Monica also supplied me with very nice tea and biscuits while we were going through the files and photographs.

Many former members of the Regiment supplied images and stories that characterize the Regiment, some in written form, some in interviews. Many of these stories have found their way into this book. It would be impossible to list all of the people here, but without all your help this would be a very boring and plain book indeed.

The command photographer British Forces Gibraltar, Corporal Scott Robertson, supplied me with many images. He took over 100 photos for the cover alone, so I had quite a selection to choose from.

Brian Reyes was very helpful in providing me with relevant articles from the Gibraltar Chronicle.

The Osprey team saw the book through the publishing process and had to deal with the ever-changing drafts of the book. In particular, I would like to thank Ruth Sheppard for the editing and proofreading of the book, Tom Owen-Evans for proofreading and editorial support, and the design team who produced such a great final product.

Several people have read parts of the book or the whole opus and have provided feedback, in particular on the detail of Gibraltar and its inhabitants which probably only a Gibraltarian can fully understand. I – and the book – owe them a great deal; their help has made the book better and more accurate. Needless to say that any remaining errors and omissions are, of course, my fault.

This book was predominantly produced in night shifts, on weekends and during the Sandhurst recess. There were too many evenings on which I deserted my family and spent my time writing rather than with them. And when I was with them my mind was more often than not in Gibraltar. This was not an easy time for the family, and I am deeply grateful for my wife Rocio's support, understanding and willingness to create as much free space for me as possible. The fact that I was writing about Gibraltar did not make things easier for Rocio, who was born and bred in Madrid. Without her support and understanding I would not have been able to write this book.

Matthias Strohn

Camberley, 2015

THE ROYAL GIBRALTAR REGIMENT: HERITAGE AND CHANGE

This is the history of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment and its preceding formations. As such it does not provide a military history of Gibraltar, and those important events in Gibraltar's military history which form part of the narrative – such as the Great Siege – are covered only in relation to the units on whose shoulders the Royal Gibraltar Regiment stands today.

The Regiment with its current name and in its current form is a fairly young organization. On 28 April 1999 the Queen granted the 'Royal' prefix to the Gibraltar Regiment – an honour granted to regiments and corps that have served with distinction. Between 1958 and 1999 the Regiment was simply known as the Gibraltar Regiment.

The continuous history of the Regiment starts with the formation of the Gibraltar Defence Force (GDF), which existed between 1939 and 1958, first as a formation of volunteers, then from 1944 onwards based on conscription and national service. It is in 1939 that the tradition of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment really starts and it is therefore fitting that the Regiment celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2014.

While the emphasis of the book lies on the years 1939 to 2014, it would be wrong not to look further back into the military history of Gibraltar. On paper, there is no unbroken line of tradition between these years and the current Regiment, but, in reality, there is. From the 18th century onwards the inhabitants of Gibraltar have served 'their' Gibraltar and the British Crown. The population's loyalty to the Royal Gibraltar Regiment and the Regiment's devotion to the defence of the Rock are good indicators of this unbroken line of trust and service.

Therefore, the book starts with a chapter which covers the years between 1704, the year when an Anglo-Dutch force seized the city from Spain, and the outbreak of the First World War. The second chapter deals with the Gibraltar Volunteer Corps, which was founded in 1915 and existed until 1920. The rest of the book then examines the 75 years of 'true' regimental history.

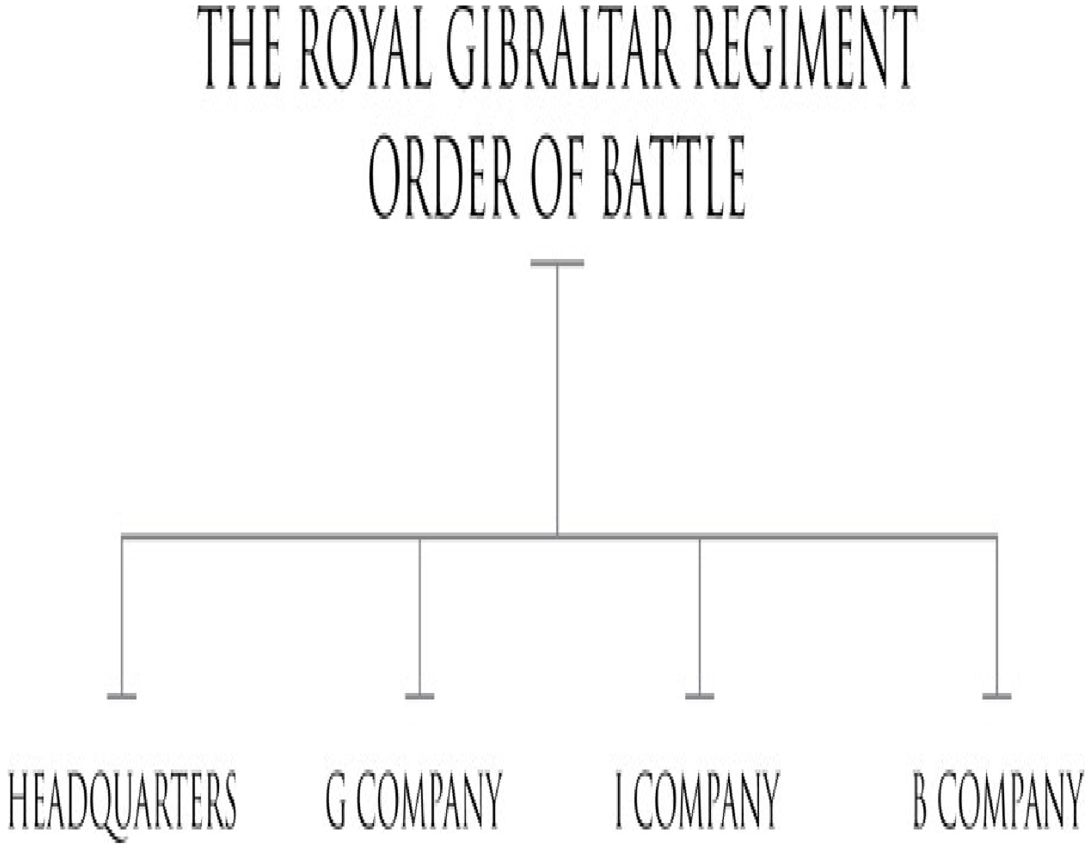
Over the centuries, many British Army units have been stationed in Gibraltar in order to defend the Rock against potential enemies and real threats. For long periods of its existence the Regiment stood in the shadow of these active units sent to the military base which Gibraltar used to be. On 1 April 1991, the Regiment was reorganized into an all-infantry unit and took over the duties of the resident battalion. With this step the Regiment was no longer simply Gibraltar's contribution to the British Army, but became the British Army in Gibraltar.

THE ROYAL GIBRALTAR REGIMENT’S ANTECEDENTS	
3 July 1915–1 February 1920	Gibraltar Volunteer Corps
28 April 1939–29 August 1958	Gibraltar Defence Force
30 August 1958–27 April 1999	Gibraltar Regiment
28 April 1999–present	Royal Gibraltar Regiment

During its history, the Regiment and its predecessors have had many roles and tasks – from infantry via anti-aircraft and gunnery to light infantry. The gunners' tradition is still visible on the Regiment's uniforms today. The white lanyard worn on the Regiment's ceremonial uniforms is an inheritance from the Royal Artillery, where it originally served a functional purpose in initiating the firing of guns. All ranks up to colour sergeant wear a white lanyard on No 2 Service dress and No 6 dress. Commissioned officers and warrant officers wear a lanyard of woven cord in the Regiment's colours of red and grey, worn on No 2 and 4 Service dress and No 6 parade dress. The Regiment's collar dogs, which represent flaming grenades containing the Castle and Key and which are worn on the lapels or collar of all ceremonial uniforms, are another inheritance from the Royal Artillery. The 'Bombs' as they are known by soldiers, are metallic on most uniforms, with embroidered badges being worn on scarlets and officers' mess dress.

The changes to the order of battle and the consequences for the Regiment and its men will be explored in this book. At the time of writing, the order of battle is that of a light role infantry battalion organization.

The Second-in-Command of the Regiment, Major Fitzgerald, with the Commander British Forces Gibraltar, Commodore Ian McGhie in 2014. Clearly visible on Major Fitzgerald's uniform are the officers' lanyards and the collar dogs. Also note the regimental badge, a yellow (golden) key on red background. The key, taken from the Gibraltar coat of arms, symbolizes Gibraltar's role as the 'key to the Mediterranean'.



The Regiment comprises four companies: Headquarters Company, G Company, I Company, and B Company. Headquarters Company is the logistical backbone of the Regiment and is made up of tradesmen such as chefs, mechanics, clerks and signallers. G Company is an operational rifle company which is deployable at a moment's notice to any task. It is at a high state of readiness for operations in Gibraltar and regularly deploys troops overseas. The company's recent operations have ranged from supporting the police in counter-terrorist exercises to maritime interdiction operations in fast boats. Although still a rifle company, I Company differs slightly in its role as all the specialists are grouped in this rifle company. Named the Force Support Company it supports all other sub-units with roles such as heavy weapons, snipers and explosive ordnance disposal. B Company is a reserve rifle company which is made up of volunteers from every walk of life. These soldiers commit some of their spare time to training. When called upon B Company assists and augments the regular companies on local operations.

Governor Admiral Sir Varyl Cargill Begg presents the first Colours to the Regiment on 25 September 1971, ending the gunners' tradition in which guns are treated as Colours.

THE REGIMENT'S COLOURS

On the battlefields of old, regiments would form lines and advance against the enemy, literally shoulder to shoulder. Perhaps the greatest motivation of these scared men as they marched into battle was the companionship of their fellow soldiers about them. It was this bond that made the Regiment, as it still does today.

Regiments needed a powerful visual symbol which illiterate and panicking soldiers could readily identify on the battlefield. It was to this that the troops would rally and it was behind this symbol that the lines would advance. Standards and banners had been used for centuries, even the ancient Romans marched behind the symbol of an eagle, but regiments in Tudor times did not serve the emperor or queen, but their colonel. The Colonel of the Regiment was the founder and financial backer of his private regiment and was seen as a figurehead, so it was his heraldic symbolism that was chosen to lead the regiment into battle – the Colours were born.

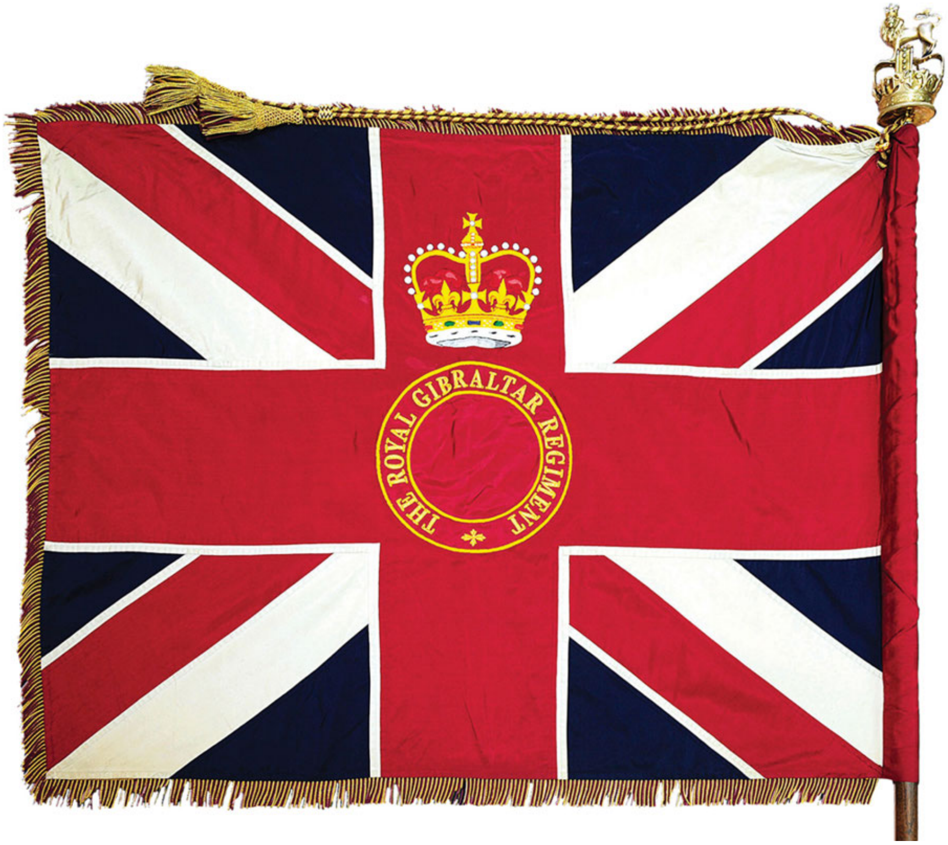
A regiment's Colours came to epitomize its ethos and, although they are nothing but sheets of embroidered silk, they have come to be treated with reverence. On parade the Colours will always be carried by a junior officer (an ensign) escorted by armed senior non-commissioned officers. The officer senior in rank is called the 'senior ensign' and carries the Queen's Colour. The junior officer carries the Regimental Colour. Even when cased in their protective leather covers the Colours are marched under armed escort.

The Colours of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment consist of two banners or flags, one known as the Queen's Colour and the other as the Regimental Colour. They measure 3 feet high by 3 feet 6 inches wide.

The Queen's Colour is the senior in precedence. It is carried on parade only when a guard will be presided over by a member of the royal family, His Excellency the Governor and Commander-in-Chief or a visiting foreign head of state. It is only trooped for members of the royal family, HE the Governor and Commander-in-Chief and on the occasion of presentation of the Colours. The Regiment can carry the Regimental Colour on all ceremonial parades if the Commanding Officer so desires.

THE QUEEN'S COLOUR

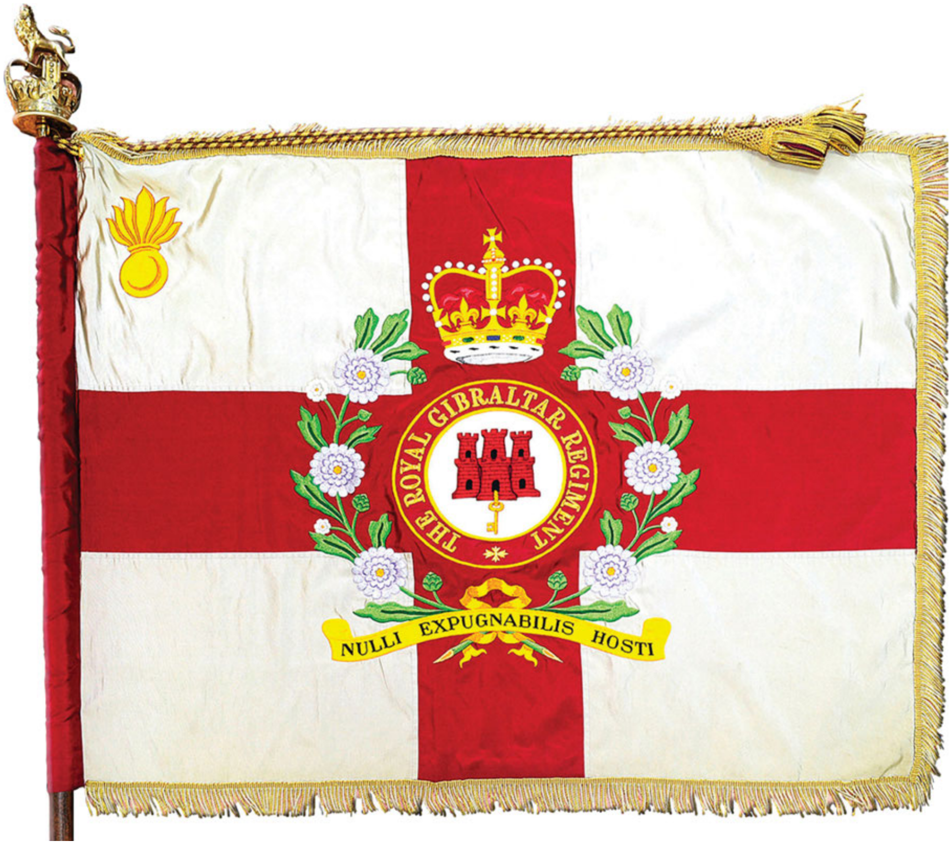
The Queen's Colour is the Union Flag. In the centre are two concentric gold circles, between which runs the inscription 'The Royal Gibraltar Regiment' in gold. Above this is the Imperial Crown. It has two tassels and a suitable staff with a crown on top of the shaft.



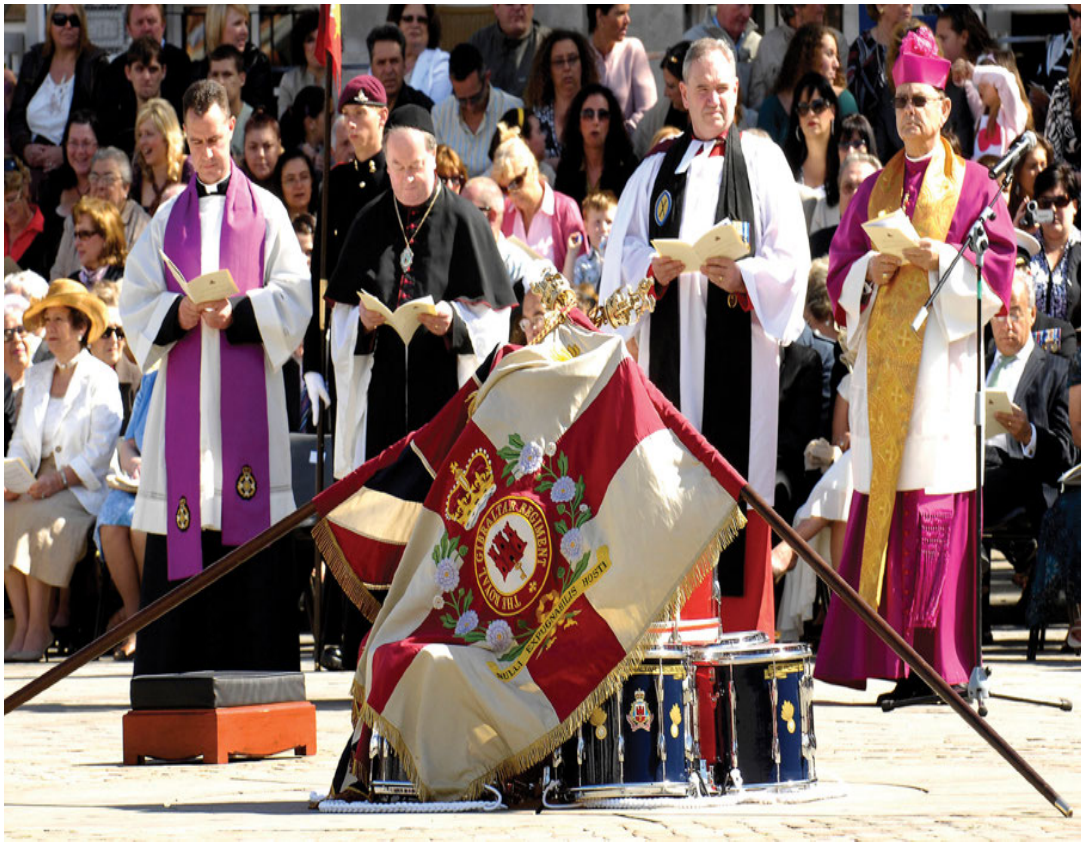
The Queen's Colour.

THE REGIMENTAL COLOUR

The Regimental Colour bears the Red Cross of St George on a field of limestone grey (Gibraltar being a large limestone rock formation). In the centre are two concentric gold circles, between which runs the inscription 'The Royal Gibraltar Regiment'. The outer circle is surrounded by a wreath of Candytuft (Iberis Gibraltarica) – a native flower of Gibraltar which is found in great profusion on the Upper Rock in late winter and spring. Within the inner circle is the crest of the Regiment – the Castle and Key in red and white (Gibraltar's colours). The Imperial Crown is above the circles, and beneath is a scroll with the regimental motto Nulli Expugnabilis Hosti ('We shall never be expelled by the enemy'). On the upper canton next to the staff a grenade in gold denotes the link with the Royal Artillery. The Colour has two tassels and a suitable staff with a crown on top of the shaft.


THE ROYAL GIBRALTAR REGIMENT
NULLI EXPUGNABILIS HOSTI

The Regimental Colour.



The celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the Regiment in 2009 included a field service. During a field service, the drums and Colours are used as the altar. Here, the new Regimental Colours can be seen clearly.

The blessing of the new Colours at their presentation during a parade at Devil's Tower Camp on 1 July 1998.

Old Colours are laid up in King’s Chapel, 1998.

Colours parade, 1998.

Before the Gibraltar Regiment's presentation of its first Colours in 1971 it followed a different tradition. Being primarily an artillery regiment it followed the Royal Artillery's custom of treating the guns as the Regiment's Colours and the guns were accorded the same respect as is now paid to the Colours themselves. Woe betide the gunner who was caught by his battery sergeant major sitting idly on one of the guns.

On 1 July 1998 HRH the Duke of Kent presented the new Colours, on behalf of Queen Elizabeth II, to the Gibraltar Regiment. The presentation of new Colours took place during a parade at Devil's Tower Camp. The old Colours were laid up in the King's Chapel. Normally, Colours are not replaced until 25 years from presentation. However, due to the royal prefix being granted to the Regiment, the Colours were rededicated on the Regiment's 70th anniversary in 2009 with the royal title included.

The new Colours are marched off after the ceremony on Grand Casemates Square, 2009.

The Governor, Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Fulton, presents the new Colours. On the left Major Ivor Lopez, who carried the Queen’s Colour as a young ensign in 1998.

CHAPTER ONE

IN THE BEGINNING:
1704–1914

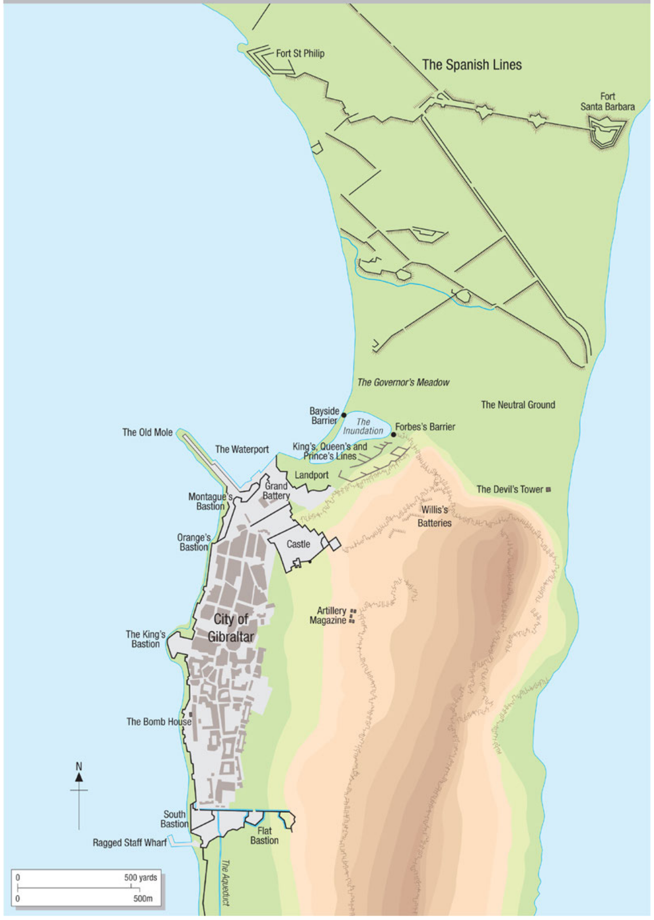
Catalan Bay: the original home of the Genoese Guard.

THE 18TH CENTURY

In 1704, during the War of the Spanish Succession, a combined Anglo-Dutch fleet under Admiral Sir George Rooke captured the then-Spanish town of Gibraltar. In 1713, the Treaty of Utrecht was negotiated, which ceded control of Gibraltar to Britain to secure Britain's withdrawal from the war. Thus began British rule in Gibraltar. The strategic position of Gibraltar ensured that possession of the Rock would have to be fought over time and again. From the early days the population of Gibraltar supported the army in this struggle. Thus, Britain defended and kept Gibraltar during the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718–20), which saw the defeat of Spain by an alliance of Britain, France, Austria and the Dutch Republic. As a consequence of the conflict, which ended with the peace treaty of The Hague on 17 February 1720, the British reorganized the defence of Gibraltar and looked towards the local population for help in times of need. The earliest verifiable historical document which provides testimony to local civilians being enrolled to defend their homeland dates from 24 June that year.

Further use was made of the local population in the years to come. On 15 February 1755 a directive was issued by the Governor to supply a group of local men with muskets and bayonets. These men mounted the picket line from Bayside to Devil's Tower Guard in order to prevent soldiers from the garrison deserting across to the enemy, and were known as the Genoese Guard. The sergeant in charge was one 'Pedro de Salas'. The Genoese had been in Gibraltar for many years before the British takeover. In 1704 they had been included as part of the population and were to remain so, slowly integrating into the community and enriching the interesting tapestry of Gibraltarian community. From the very beginning of the British conquest the Genoese had been of considerable assistance to the military. The first name to come to light is that of Giovanni Bautista Gaza who, in June 1705, was presented with a house by Prince George of Hesse as a reward for valuable services rendered. The following month another property was granted, to

Giambattista Sturla, a rather colourful character of the day, and a third to Juan Battista Berro.


The defences at the northern end of Gibraltar during the Great Siege, 1779–83

Fort St Philip
The Spanish Lines
Fort Santa Barbara
The Governor's Meadow
The Neutral Ground
Bayside Barrier
The Inundation
Forbes's Barrier
The Old Mole
The Waterport
King's, Queen's and Prince's Lines
Landport
Grand Battery
Montague's Bastion
The Devil's Tower
Willis's Batteries
Orange's Bastion
Castle
Artillery Magazine
City of Gibraltar
The King's Bastion
The Bomb House
N
South Bastion
Flat Bastion
Ragged Staff Wharf
The Aqueduct
0
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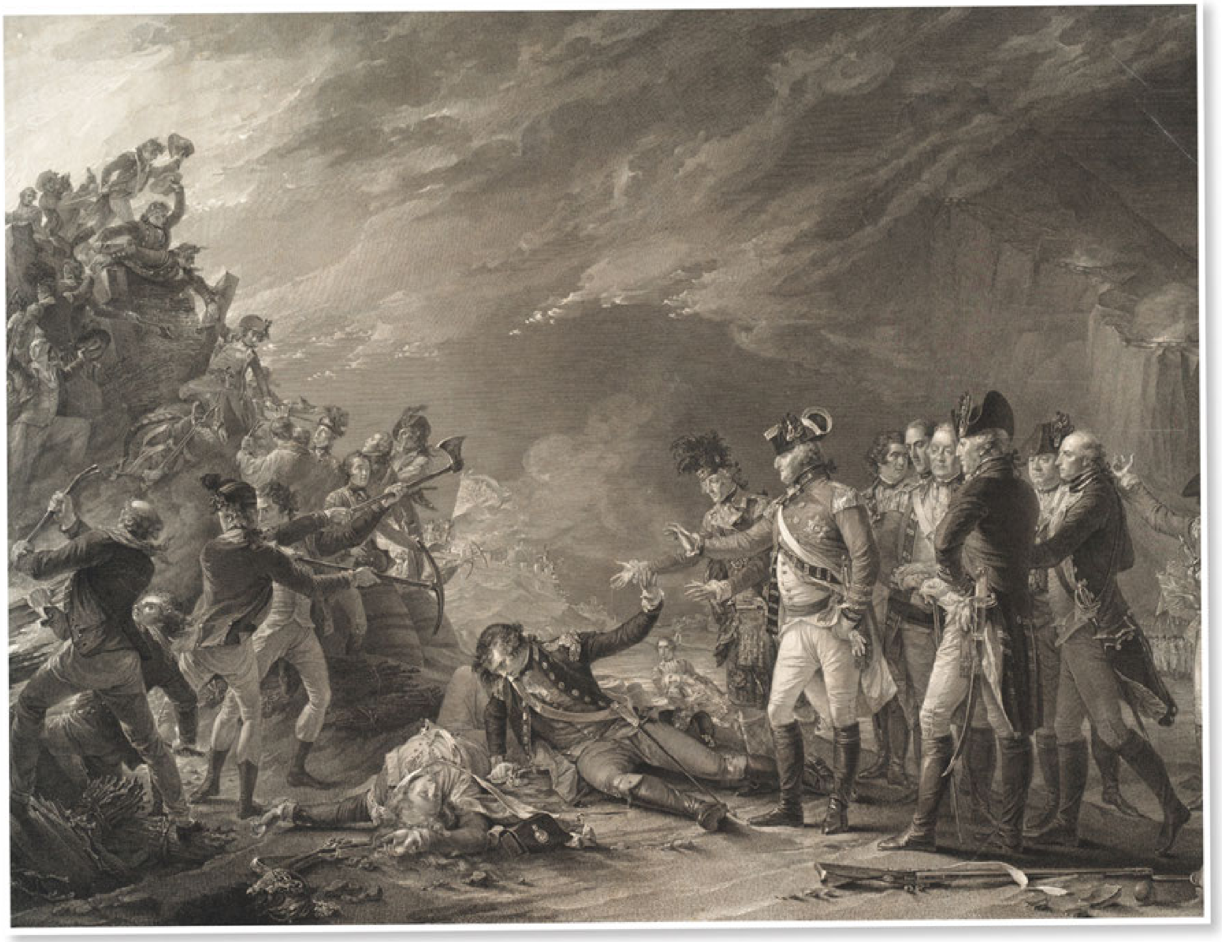
The Great Sortie



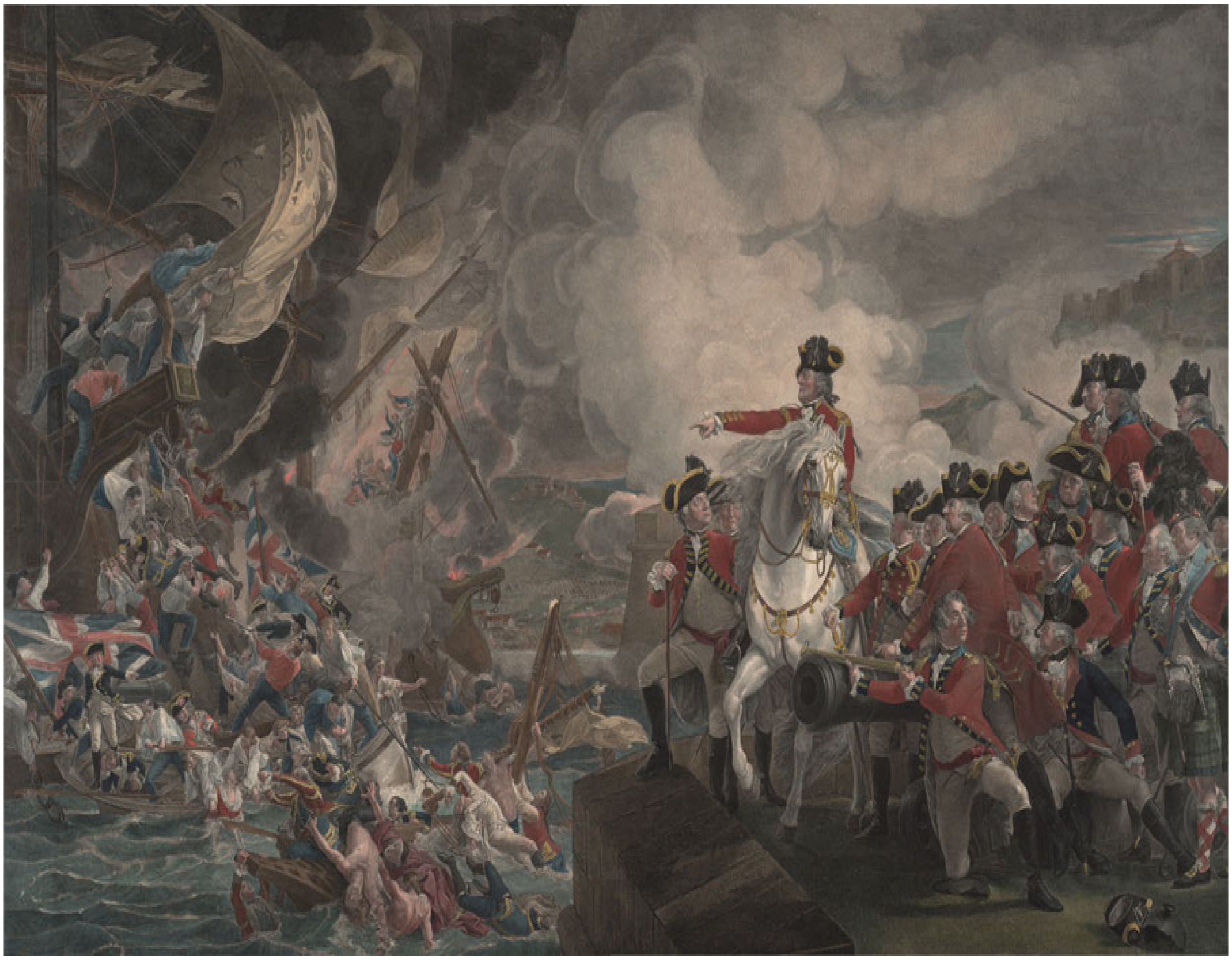
Governor Elliot and his officers during the sortie of 27 November 1781. At left, British troops and Gibraltarian workmen destroy the captured Spanish works.

The initial order for the Great Sortie confirms the participation of the local workmen:

Gibraltar, Nov 26 1781

All Grenadiers and Light Infantry of the Garrison, and all the men of the 12th and Handenberg’s Regiments, Officers and Non Commissioned Officers now on duty, to be immediately relieved and join their

Regiments: to form a detachment consisting of the 12th Handenberg's Regiments complete, the grenadiers and light infantry of all the other regiments, one Captain, three Lieutenants, ten Non Commissioned Officers, and a hundred Artillery; and three Engineers, seven Officers and twelve Non Commissioned Officers overseers; with a hundred and sixty workmen from the line, and forty workmen from the Artificer Company. Each man to have thirty-six rounds of ammunition, with a good flint in his piece, and another in his pocket.



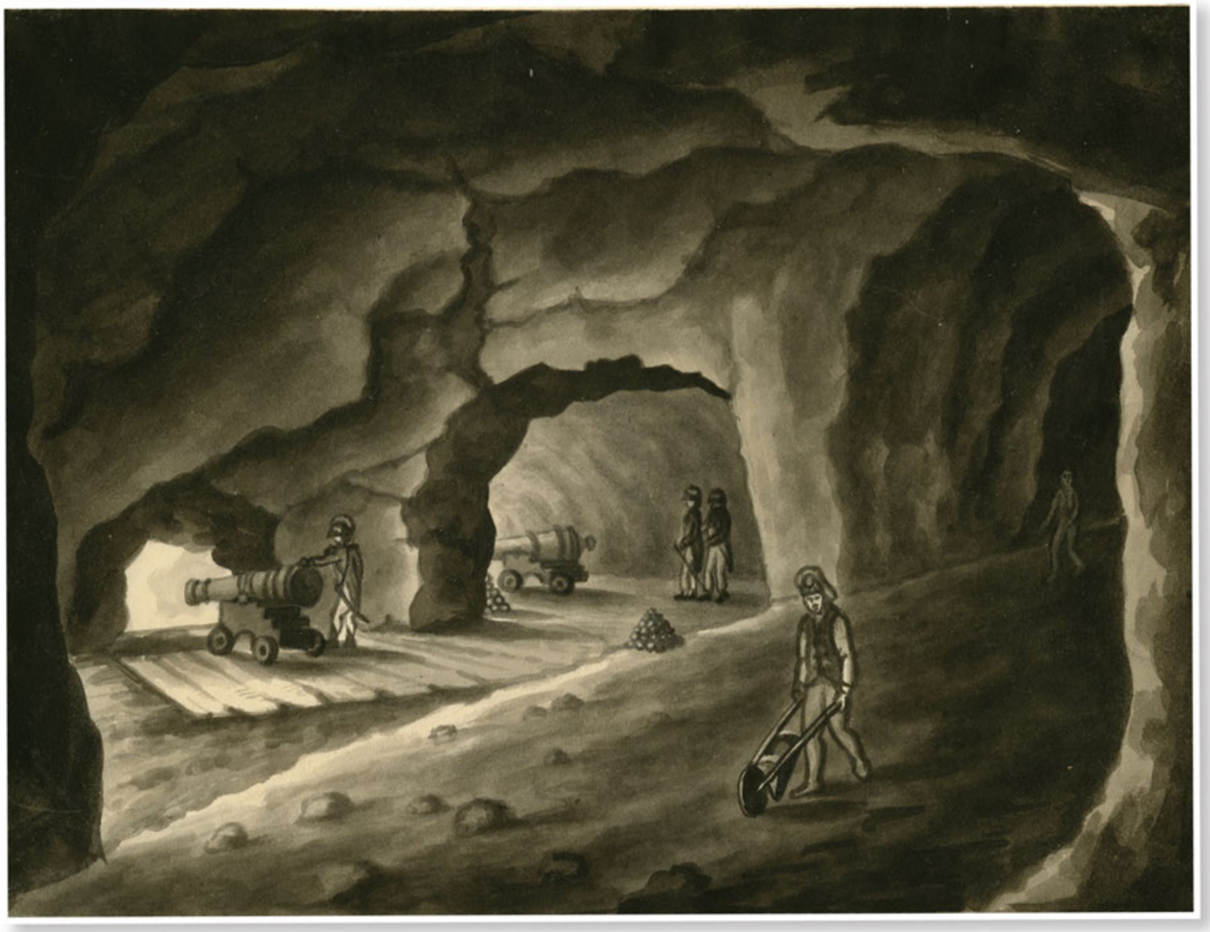
Probably the most famous painting of The Great Siege, depicting the British and Hanoverian officers. Governor Elliot can be seen on horseback. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library, Providence, USA)

During the early sieges the Genoese toiled on the isthmus connecting Gibraltar to Spain, levelling the ground in order to deny the enemy any use of ground cover. They were also employed in taking up the paving within the city to expose the soft sand beneath, in order to reduce the risk of ricochets from enemy cannon balls. They are on record as forming the work parties used to demolish prominent buildings which, it had been thought, were assisting the enemy in orientating their cannons onto other targets. The Genoese Guard was disbanded in 1763, at the end of the Seven Years War. During the Great Siege, 1779–83, after a number of people had been evacuated back to Italy, some 40 per cent of those who remained formed a unit dubbed the Genoese Brigade.

During the Great Siege there were numerous recorded instances where the civilian population of Gibraltar assisted in the defence of the Rock. The most prominent instance was the Great Sortie of 26/27 November 1781. The enemy had been working hard to enhance the Spanish batteries north of Gibraltar. There had been considerable and regular improvements of the Spanish fortifications since the beginning of the siege in 1779, and the batteries were slowly encroaching on the Rock. From some of their battery positions the Spanish were now capable of bombarding the Red Sands area and even as far south as South Barracks. These advances, coupled with the devastating outbreaks of scurvy, meagre supplies, and the enemy's recent tactic of cutting short the fuses on their cannon balls causing deadly overhead bursts, were having a considerably negative effect on the garrison's morale.

The Governor of Gibraltar, Lieutenant-General George Augustus Elliot, who was in command of the troops in the besieged town, knew that something had to be done. The 'hero of Gibraltar', as he became known later, developed an aggressive plan based on a sortie onto the enemy's forward lines.

He felt that to strike a blow by destroying these stupendous works – the construction of which had cost the besiegers much labour and expense – would, at one stroke, both frustrate the enemy's designs and lift the hearts of the men of his command.



Inside of a part of the Grand Gallery at Gibraltar by C. Williams. Original unsigned wash drawing from Williams's Journal dated December 1808. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library, Providence, USA)

In simple terms the plan involved an assembly at Grand Parade followed by a silent approach towards the Spanish defences. Once on the isthmus, the infantry would lead the advance to protect the forward areas and flanks, while the artificers and workmen carried out their appointed tasks of destroying the fortifications and spiking the cannons. The workmen were 160 local labourers who had volunteered to take part in the operation.

The efforts and successes achieved by the soldiers and workmen are well described in a paragraph of John Drinkwater's History of the Great Siege of Gibraltar:

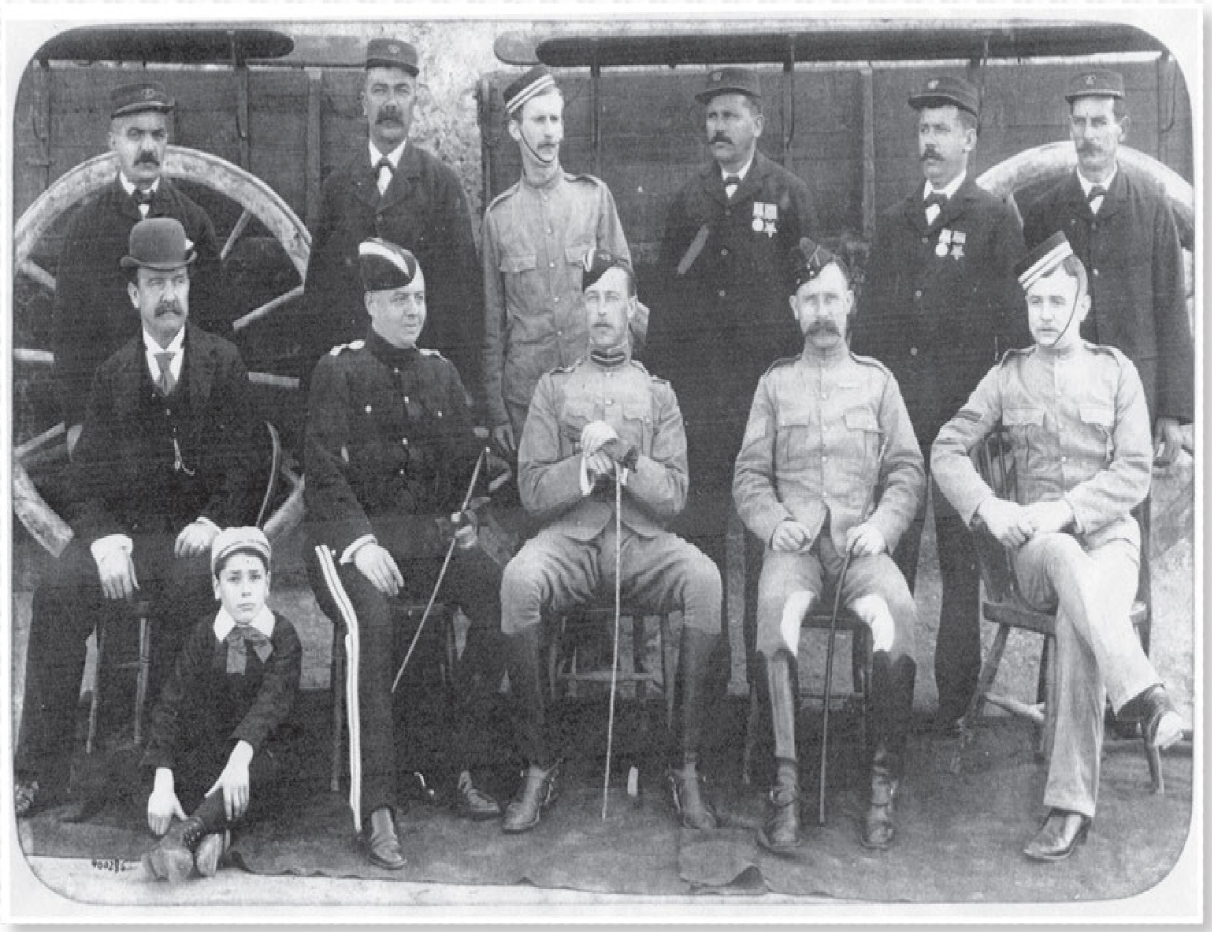
When our troops had taken possession, the attacking corps formed, agreeably to their orders, to repel any attempt which the enemy might make to prevent the destruction of the works, whilst the 12th Regiment took post in front of St. Carlos battery, to sustain the western attack; and the reserve, under Maj Maxwell, drew up in the further gardens. The exertions of the workmen and artillerymen were wonderful. The batteries were soon in a state for the fire faggots to operate; and the flames spread with astonishing rapidity into every part. The column of fire and smoke which rolled from the works, beautifully illuminated the troops and neighbouring objects, forming all together a coup-d'oeil not possible to be described.

FROM THE ROCK TO AFRICA

The years after the Great Siege were fairly peaceful for the town of Gibraltar and its inhabitants. This is not to say that no military action occurred in the area, but these actions were largely confined to the sea, including an incomplete blockade of the Rock by the Spanish between 1804 and 1808. The end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 brought a long period of peace not only to Gibraltar, but to Europe. During these peaceful times the British continued to improve the fortifications of the Rock. In particular, they created some 7 miles of tunnels within it, as the general threat from Spain still existed. However, the direct engagement of the population of Gibraltar in these projects was limited and so it was quite some years before another group of men from Gibraltar entered this history.

In 1819, the east African country of Sudan was invaded and taken over by an Egyptian administration. The resentment felt by the Sudanese towards this enforced colonial situation erupted into violent unrest in the 1870s, instigated and led by a Muslim cleric, Muhammed Ahmad. In 1881, Ahmad proclaimed himself the Mahdi, the promised redeemer of the Islamic world.

Attempts to capture the Mahdi by Egyptian forces did not go well. Colonel William Hicks, a retired British Army officer who was serving the governor of Egypt and Sudan, was in command of the Egyptian forces. He felt that his troops had more in common with the enemy than with the British officers who commanded them. This lack of assurance inevitably led to their defeat at the battle of El Obeid in central Sudan.



Men working with the Corps of Transport in 1897, some wearing their Africa campaign medals.

EGYPT 1884-6

The Khedive’s Star, awarded to a member of the Regiment.

Egyptian War Medal with a clasp bearing the title 'Suakin 1885', awarded to a member of the Regiment.

Further interventions, headed by General Charles Gordon, a distinguished career officer, brought about various successes but also much political confusion. It was during this disorganized campaign that 100 men belonging to the Transport Section of the Commissariat in Gibraltar went off to join the battle in Egypt and the Sudan as wagon drivers. The men left in two groups. The first, in early March 1882, consisted of 44 drivers and 100 mules. The second batch of 56 men left on 21 March. They landed at the port of Suakin on the west coast of the Red Sea. Soon after, while carrying out their mission of delivering and moving ammunition stores and equipment they were involved in battles and skirmishes with the Dervishes, followers of the now well-established religious leader, the Mahdi.

This body of men was called The King’s Muleteers and is still referred to as Los Carreteros del Rey. After their return from the campaign they were awarded the Khedive’s Star and the Egyptian War Medal with a clasp bearing the title ‘Suakin 1885’.

A curious anecdote, worthy of mention, tells of an incident which came about as a result of the necessary purchase of mules for the campaign. Britain bought mules from a number of European countries and all the mules bought in the south of Spain were mustered in Malaga and Cadiz, where representatives of the Commissariat selected the best animals for shipment to Gibraltar. Once the need for mules was over, the Governor received a somewhat audacious letter from the Spanish government asking for payments to be made to compensate for the damage caused to the Malaga road by hundreds of mules making their way to Gibraltar.

THE BOER WAR AND AN ATTEMPT TO FORM A CORPS

The origins of the Boer War go back to 1806 when Britain took possession of the Cape Colony during the Napoleonic Wars. Over subsequent years, this appropriation resulted in a migration of the Boers towards Natal. When Natal was annexed by the British in 1843 the migration switched to the interior where two independent Boer republics were established. In 1886 large deposits of gold were found in the South African Republic and this resulted in many foreigners arriving, mainly from Britain, to search for their fortunes. Tensions escalated, initially locally and then at a national level, and in 1899 war broke out between Britain and the Boers.

Despite the distance between Gibraltar and the point of conflict, it was felt by the local population – possibly because there were colonial troops involved in the skirmishes – that ‘Gibraltarians’ needed to play their own part in the defence of the Rock in any future eventuality. It was agreed that the best way to achieve this was to convince the colonial government to sanction the formation of a volunteer corps. The initial move was taken by a group of prominent Gibraltarians to call a public meeting to gauge the feelings of the population. The meeting was held at the Theatre Royal on 30 January 1900 and was an overwhelming success. It was later claimed that over 3,000 people turned up to the event and that the theatre was so overcrowded that many interested people had to be turned away. With the Independencia Band playing, the leading group, consisting of Mr M. J. Pitman jnr, Mr G. M. Ballon and Mr W. J. Sallust Smith JP, proposed the formation of a local corps of volunteers. Mr Ballon made a speech in which he said that:

Gibraltar has ever given proof of its loyalty and patriotism, and it is our duty to share in the work of defending the Empire to which we have the honour to belong, and follow in the wake of other Colonies by forming a

> local Corps of Volunteers and offering our services to the Government of this Colony in order to help, should the occasion arise, in the defence of our dear Rock.

He also stated that:

> … although we may be few in number when compared to the immense populations which acknowledge the sovereignty of our Queen, our patriotism and loyalty towards our Queen and our flag fully make up for our fewness in numbers, and we are never to forget that we are an integral part of that Empire over which the sun never sets, and which the most splendid record that history can show, and that our Rock stands forth as a bulwark in the line of the Empire's defence.
>
> …Maybe some weak-minded persons amongst our townsmen will endeavour to cast ridicule on the spontaneous and popular movement which has developed in our midst; this meeting will give an answer to them. I am sure I see present to-night such goodly elements of our manhood that, properly led and under constituted authority, it will be able to carry out this patriotic work which is worthy of support from every Gibraltarian, and I therefore beg to propose the following resolution – 'This meeting of the inhabitants of Gibraltar is of the opinion that the time has come to form a Local Corps of Volunteers to aid, if necessary the defence of this Colony'.

Before the resolution was put to the vote, a coal labourer by the name of Martinez stood up in one of the boxes and, speaking on behalf of himself and his fellow workmen, stated that if need be, after proper training, they would be prepared to do their duty alongside the British troops in South Africa: he was greatly cheered. It was then proposed by Mr Ballon, and seconded by Mr V. J. Imossi, that a committee should be formed to formulate matters and forward the same message to HE The Governor for submission to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The following gentlemen were unanimously elected to act as a committee; G. M. Ballon, V. J. Imossi, M. J. Porral, Dr C. L. Francia, and Messrs. J. J. Onetti and W. L. Lequich.

The results of these meetings and of further work were put in a letter that the committee sent to the Governor on 10 March 1900. After a short summary of the meeting held on 30 January the letter went straight in medias res: the committee stated that 'the inhabitants of Gibraltar in this meeting assembled are of the opinion that the time has arrived for forming a local corps of Volunteers to aid, if necessary, in the defence of this colony.' Apparently, already 500 men had already expressed their willingness to enlist as volunteers, many of whom had formerly served in the British Army. As further proof of Gibraltar's seriousness the letter stated that the population had raised a subscription towards the Lord Mayor's War Fund that already amounted to £2,000. The last point raised by the committee in the letter pointed towards a bigger issue and the role of Gibraltar within the Empire: the committee believed that 'Gibraltar is the only Colony in which no local Volunteer Corps exists, and that the inhabitants are desirous to supply this omission and take their necessary share in the burden of Imperial duties in this matter.'

By 17 March the Governor General Sir Robert Biddulph had passed the letter to the Defence Committee headed by J. Chamberlain MP. The idea was generally supported by the Governor in that he believed this was a genuine desire, from a large section of the population, to form a volunteer corps. He noted that the committee had not gone into detail on the form the corps would take but was careful to state that he would not attempt to establish the corps himself, until he was informed of the Colonial Office's view on the matter. He ended his covering letter with the suggestion that should the desire expressed be favourably considered, a corps of rifle volunteers would be, in his opinion, the most useful.

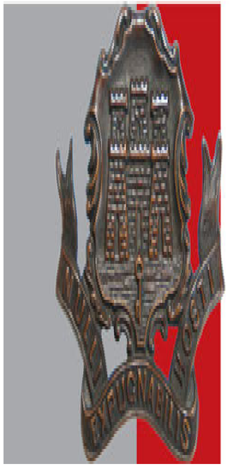
The Colonial Office, after consulting with the War Office, passed the Governor's letter to the Colonial Defence Committee, which then issued a secret memorandum on the subject on 31 March 1900. The initial reaction was negative – stating the fact that the population of Gibraltar was not sufficiently strong to sustain a volunteer corps. At the end of 1896 the registered population (excluding the garrison) was 20,658, including just over 4,000 men of fighting age. It was also considered that in the event of a siege the able bodied would be required in various capacities in the service of the government, and therefore, no troops could be raised from the population of Gibraltar.

The memorandum then changed to a more assenting analysis:

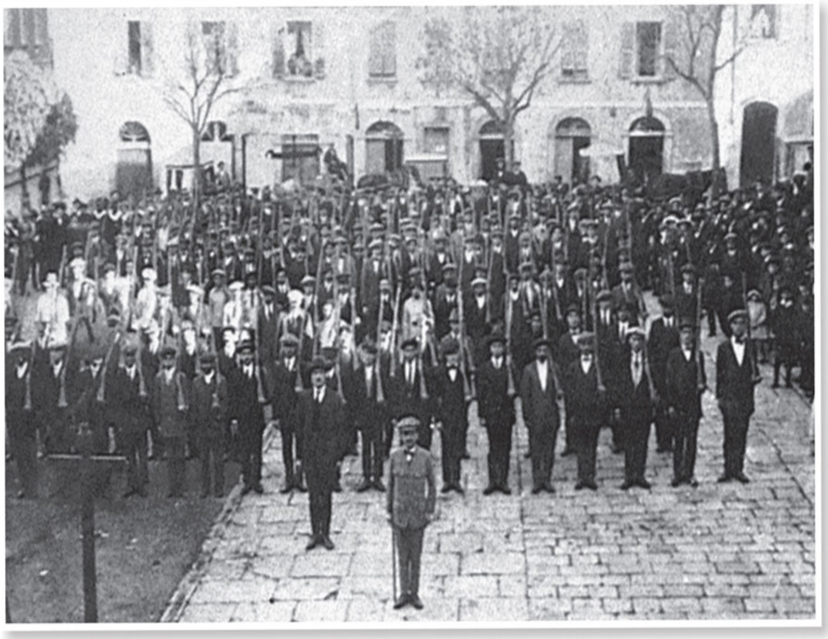
From the point of view of increasing the military strength of the Fortress, the Colonial Defence Committee see no reason for departing from this opinion; and in recommending that the Memorial now before them should be acceded to, they are guided by mainly political considerations. Though the memorialists are in error in their belief that Gibraltar is the only Colony in the Empire in which no local Volunteer Corps exists, it is nevertheless a fact that the formation of such a corps has been generally encouraged except in the Colonies where by reason of anticipated disloyalty of the population in the event of war with certain countries it has been considered dangerous to train any part of that population in the use of arms. It is for this reason that no proposition could be entertained for the formation of a Volunteer Corps in Mauritius. No such reason, however, exists in Gibraltar, where the present loyal conduct of the inhabitants deserves encouragement. The cordial acceptance of their spontaneous offer cannot but have a good effect on the spirit of the population, while the subsequent training and discipline which it will involve will make a considerable section of the inhabitants more easy to control in the event of the siege to which Gibraltar has to look forward.

This ended the population’s initiative for the establishment of a volunteer corps. It looked as though this was the final decision. However, only 14 years later, in 1914, the outbreak of the First World War forever changed the world and in Gibraltar, it gave the volunteer corps a second chance.

CHAPTER TWO



THE GIBRALTAR VOLUNTEER CORPS IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR: 1915–20



The Gibraltar Volunteer Corps on parade in its early days. Note the variety of clothes and the rather unorthodox rifle drill that would pose a challenge to any drill sergeant.

As the clouds of war rolled over Europe in 1914 members of the population in Gibraltar felt the need once more to work towards the establishment of a volunteer corps. The venue for the initial moves was a local club, the Calpe Rowing Club. A group of members met on a number of occasions and discussed ways and means of establishing their objectives.

Very soon after the formation of this group, then run by committee and all of them members of the rowing club, it became obvious that because of the great deal of interest aroused, the membership needed to be opened out to all British subjects in Gibraltar. It was the right decision; the numbers soon swelled to over 400. Mr Hayward, a retired regimental sergeant major, took over the training of these unofficial volunteers. The training included squad and rifle drill, drilling as a platoon and a company, route marches, and notions of attack and defence. A great deal was learnt by the men, not least during a number of separate specialist lectures for future non-commissioned officers.

Despite all this activity no official sanction was forthcoming and within time a certain amount of apathy began to set in. Interest began to wane among some of the volunteers, and soon it was felt necessary to form a council which would fight their corner and work towards convincing the colonial government that the volunteers needed official recognition. This council was ably led by Captain Alfred Andrew Speed who slowly, patiently and efficiently steered the council in a manner that would help achieve the aim of official recognition for the volunteers.

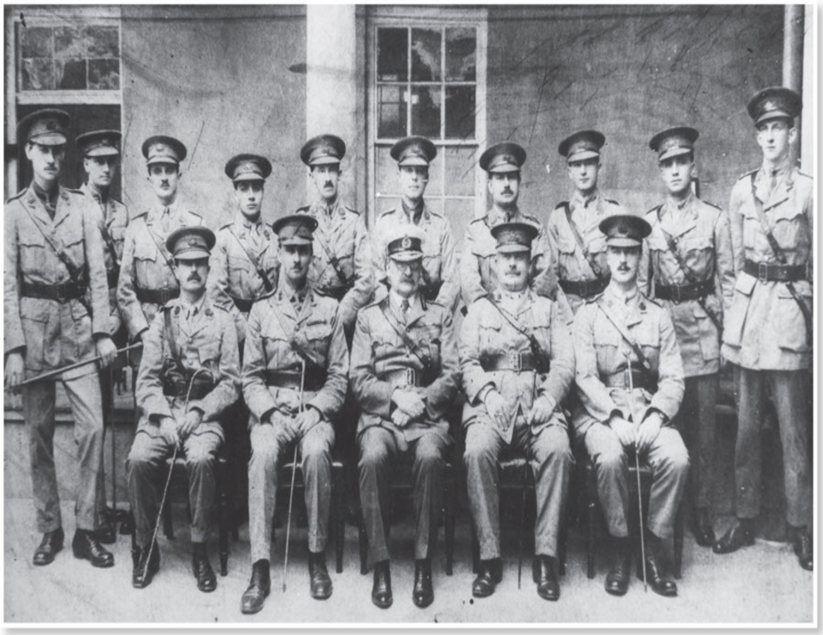
In 1914 and early 1915, there were several instances that can easily be taken light-heartedly in this day and age, but at the time, caused a great deal of concern. Drill and rifle drill was an essential and important part of the volunteers' training, but from where could the rifles be obtained? In an unusual but practical move, the Boys Brigade volunteered their wooden rifles for the use of the volunteer force. Further help came from the Boy Scouts, who, as a temporary measure, handed their premises at Orange Bastion over to the corps. With interventions by the council, the situation started to move towards a more official and positive setting. In a short time they were allocated the ground floor of the Legislative Council building, and following this, they were finally accommodated at Wellington Front. This allocation was to remain until the force was disbanded.

The situation was never going to be easy. The force was born out of enthusiasm and a feeling of wanting to play a part in the defence of the Rock, but 1914 and early 1915 saw overall and general shortages and the situation in the world forced the government to make difficult decisions on a daily basis. Moreover, Gibraltar was not in the centre of the United Kingdom's attention. The war on the Western Front was bloody and other operations, such as Gallipoli, did not go according to plan. In the circumstances it was clear that Gibraltar would not be high on the UK's list of priorities. Under these conditions the progress made by the corps was slow and ponderous. Equipment was still in short supply. Nevertheless, drills took place four times a month and discipline was maintained through the imposition of fines. These fines had a big impact, especially as the members of the force were not paid for their time.

In a scrapbook compiled by Captain Albert Gonzalez, one of the founder members of the Gibraltar Volunteer Corps (GVC), there are references to costs and availability of kit at the time. These show the difficult situation that the members of the GVC found themselves in:

Caps can be had, but no Khaki in stock at present. Some boots can be spared. Officers can be supplied with uniform. Not known whether this will be a grant or whether they will be supplied free of charge.

The Boys Brigade in 1914.



Officers of the corps with Governor Sir Herbert Miles.

Fines introduced by the GVC in 1915

The fines for lack of discipline were:

For loading any fire-arm contrary to rules of order	10 shillings
For discharging any fire-arm accidentally	10 shillings
For appearing at any parade with a dirty fire-arm	2 shillings and 6 pe
For disobedience of orders	10 shillings
For drunkenness at a rifle meeting or other assembly of members or on parade	10 shillings
For being guilty of misconduct neglect or any act to the prejudice of good order or discipline	10 shillings
For pointing a loaded or unloaded fire-arm at a person without Orders	1 pound
For acting in a manner likely to cause an accident with a fire-arm	1 pound

In addition to these fines, there was a maximum fine of £50 or six months' imprisonment for not attending when called up for active service.

There is a note showing concern on the subject of job retention and financial liability:

When on active service, guarantee to men joining that their appointment in civil life will be left open for them on their return.

Guarantee that they will not suffer financially owing to their having to be away on active service.

These concerns had already been taken up by the council set up to look after the interests of the corps, and in May 1915 a lengthy letter was addressed to the Colonial Secretary in Gibraltar setting out the concerns and making suggestions as to the way forward:

With reference to the Ordinance recently published to provide for the establishment of a Volunteer Corps in Gibraltar I have the honour to inform you that His Excellency the Governor has requested that the Council of the existing unofficial Volunteer Force should remain in force for the present presumably to assist, with the suggestions and otherwise, in the formation of the Volunteer Corps.

The Council have accordingly considered the matter and ascertained the views and feelings of the men of the Volunteer Force in regards to enrolment. They find the men are keen to enrol; within the last few days over 184 have presented themselves for medical examination and 179 of them have been found fit.

It appears, however, that many of the men are supporters of their families and that they will hesitate to enrol until definite information is available on a number of points regarding terms and conditions of service.

The Council are therefore of the opinion that it will be necessary before enrolment is commenced for Rules to be made under the Ordinance in regard to the following items: …

Non Active Service

… complete uniform shall be provided free by the WD to all members of the Corps as early as possible, coupled with a written official statement as to what portions of uniform will be supplied on enrolment and shortly afterwards. It is important that boots should be supplied on enrolment for those in poor circumstances, if not for the whole, and if putties, khaki drill shorts, shirts, caps or helmets, belts and frogs could also be supplied on enrolment or shortly afterwards the requirements for the summer months would be met. This would reduce the need for khaki drill, for which it is understood there is great demand at home, to a very small quantity… It is suggested the rules should be made providing for 100 drills per annum to be held at hours convenient for the majority of the men, without specifying exact dates and times, and requiring each member to attend fifty of them each year under penalty of a small fine or dismissal from the Corps in default of a lawful excuse.

… It is suggested that rules should be made as follows:-

1. That when circumstances admit a Canvas Camp shall be provided by the WD for twenty-one days in each year either consecutively or in three periods of seven days each.

2. That all members of the Corps shall spend seven consecutive days and nights in camp per annum, whenever circumstances admit of a camp being provided by the WD, under penalty of a small fine or dismissal from the Corps in default of a lawful excuse.

3. That rations should be provided throughout the period or periods of the camps.

4. That in cases in which loss of salary or wages is entailed by attendance in camps the amount of such loss shall be paid to the member prejudiced, on production of satisfactory proof…

Active Service

It is presumed that Military Regulations provide for the full uniform and equipment of any Volunteer Corps called out on active service but a written official statement that this is the case would set doubts among the men on this point at rest.

… Pay and allowances when on Active Service, is one of the most important for the reasons given in the early part of this letter. It is suggested that a rule should be made to the effect that the Regulations in force in regard to Territorial or Volunteer Forces in England which have been called on Active Service will be applied to The Gibraltar Volunteer Corps and containing a schedule showing what such pay and allowances may be so that all may read and understand.

General

The question of appointments, promotions and rank of Officers and NCOs, is a somewhat difficult and delicate one but the Council think that it will be in the general interests of the Corps if a rule were made … to the effect that generally such appointments and promotions would be made amongst the members of the Corps and preference given to the members who belonged to the original unofficial Volunteer Corps or were actively connected therewith before the date of the publication of the Ordinance, but leaving it open to his Excellency to appoint any other person in special cases.

There is considerable feeling amongst the members of the unofficial Volunteer Corps that some little preference should be shown to them in this connection having regards to their months of drilling and training. If however, His Excellency thinks that any rule in this regards is unnecessary an expression from his Excellency of the view that preference should be on the lines indicated would be appreciated…

Chairman of the Council

Volunteer Force

The answer to the council's requests was not long in coming. By 14 June the Colonial Secretary, W. F. Robertson, replied with a four-page letter covering all the points raised. The main general comment which affected many of the individual requests was that it should be borne in mind that the Volunteer Corps Ordinance was only operative during the continuance of the war and that issue and scale of pay and allowances could not accurately be explained in the letter as they were largely dependent on circumstances. It was however to be broadly understood that the terms under which the command was to treat the volunteers, when on active service or under canvas, was to be the same as Territorial soldiers.

For non-active service the issue of uniform was confirmed: for officers, two suits khaki drill, one cap, one Sam Browne belt and one shoulder strap; for other ranks, two suits khaki drill, one cap, one pair of boots (for those who could not afford their own), one belt, one bayonet frog, one bayonet, one ammunition belt and one rifle.

The training regime suggested was not considered suitable as it represented the situation within permanent organizations. Training under canvas was not considered feasible due to lack of space and shortages of tents. Both the ordinary training and training under canvas was to be only the remit of the Commanding Officer acting on the advice of his officers.

When on active service rations would be provided, together with all necessary equipment. Pay and allowances, however, could not be based on that of Territorial soldiers in England as these were, at all times, subject to overseas postings which was not the case for the locally raised and deployed GVC. Some things obviously never change. Pay and allowances were, therefore, to follow the army regulations of the command. Should any member of the corps be accepted for service at the front, he would be under the same terms as a Territorial soldier.

Private John Brooks of the Gibraltar Volunteer Corps.

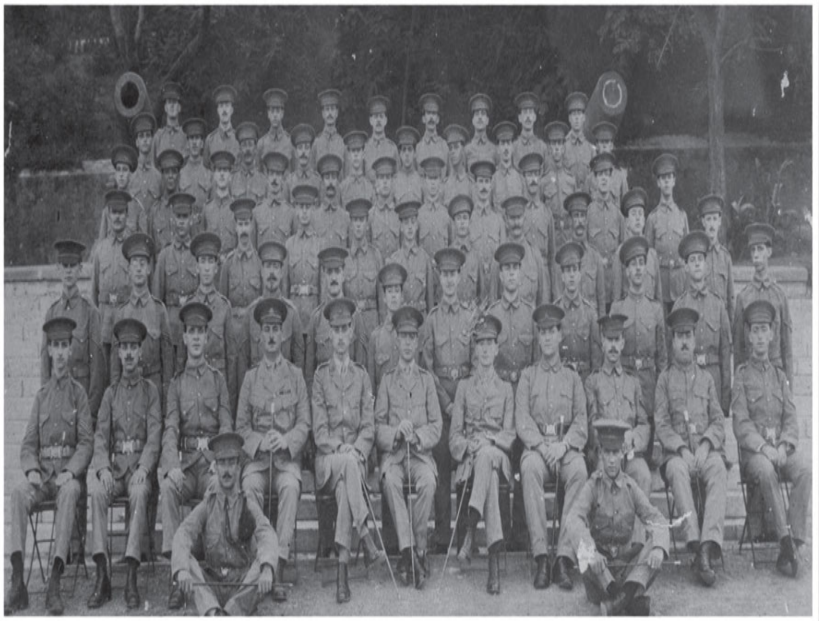
On the question of promotion of officers and senior non-commissioned officers, the letter stated that, as regards officers, all commissions were ultimately given by the Crown and no limitations could be imposed, but that service in the present unofficial corps would not be left out of consideration. With respect to non-commissioned officers the responsibility to make recommendations in each company would rest with the company commanders as they would be held responsible for the efficiency of non-commissioned officers in their companies.

The outline rules had been set and the formation of the corps was set in motion. The response had been overwhelming and volunteers came in from all quarters. After the initial trials suffered by this keen body of men, it must have been a proud moment when official sanction finally arrived, and 3 July was set as the date when the Gibraltar Volunteer Corp was to be officially born.

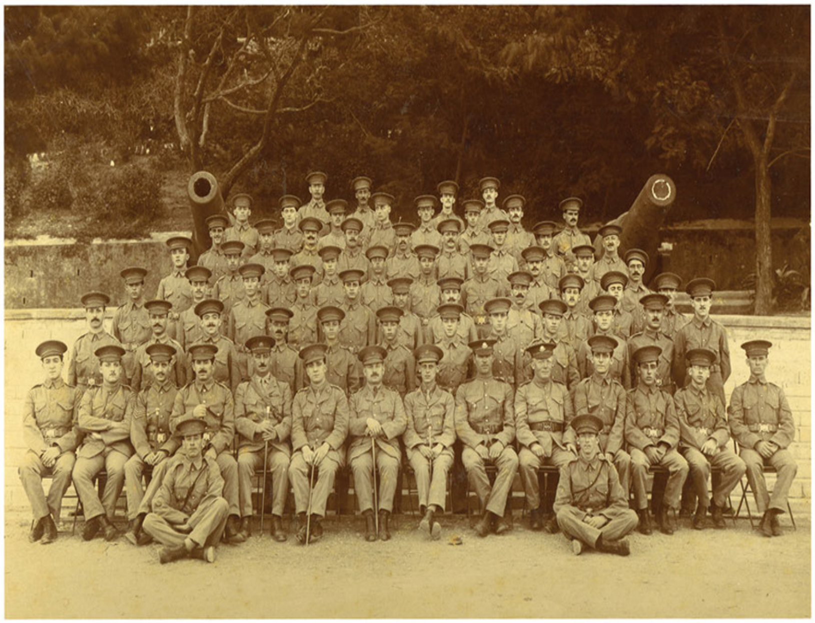
Morning gunfire at 0454 hrs on Saturday, 3 July 1915 heralded a dull, grey and sultry levanter day, but it was also the ‘birthday’ of the Gibraltar Volunteer Corps. The enthusiasm of the men, together with the support of the Gibraltarian community and the official recognition which was to be accorded to the corps, banished worries about the grey clouds overhead.

The parade was to be carried out on the upper emplacements of Wellington Front and, as the men marched towards this location shortly before 1800 hrs, led by the band of the Boy Scouts, they were cheered and supported all along the route by a large section of the population. During the march to the parade ground they were under the charge of

Regimental Sergeant Major Hayward, who had been drilling them for the previous eight months, pending the receipt of sanction from the king for the formation of the corps. On arrival at the parade ground they formed a hollow square, dressed off and awaited the arrival of the inspecting officer, the Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Lieutenant-General Sir Herbert Miles.



B Company, Gibraltar Volunteer Corps, also on Grande Parade during the First World War.



A Company, Gibraltar Volunteer Corps, on Grande Parade, August 1915.

A contemporary article in the Gibraltar Chronicle reporting on the parade describes the men as being 'Dressed in their best, and looking a remarkably well set up body'. One can imagine how proud these volunteers must have felt who, less than a year before, in quite small numbers, and restricted only to members of the Calpe Rowing Club, had spontaneously and unofficially started a movement which would eventually lead to the creation of a local military force.

The Gibraltar Volunteer Corps was organized into four companies. A, B, C and D. The companies were each commanded by a captain assisted by two subalterns. Each company also had a company sergeant major, four sergeants and eight corporals. There were also two buglers, and 80 men. Training was held four to five times a month and consisted of basic infantry skills. As the training progressed, the corps was also given other duties interspersed with their training.

The responsibility of commanding the Gibraltar Volunteer Corps fell to Major G. B. Roberts RE and that of Adjutant and Quartermaster to Major T. F. Cooper (late RA). The remaining other officers, 14 in total, were commissioned from the ranks of the GVC: Captains A. Gonzalez, N. P. Cortez, A. H. Shepard-Capurro, J. A. Taylor, A. L. Andrew-Speed and P. F. Lyons; Lieutenants L. J. Imossi, F. L. Ruggeri, A. J. Ferrari and W. D. Piccone; and Second Lieutenants A. L. Dotto, C. J. Cabedo, J. A. Malin and C. R. Povedano.

The GVC always sought to provide a very public face in Gibraltar and it provided the first guard of honour ever mounted by a body of Gibraltarian soldiers. This was on Saturday 18 December 1915 for the Governor, when he carried out his administrative inspection of the corps at Wellington Front. The guard was 100 strong, with each company providing 25 men, commanded by Captain A. Gonzalez with two other officers, Lieutenant W. Piccone and Second Lieutenant C. R. Povedano, also on parade.

A notable parade was held on 16 October 1915 when L. H. Fava & Co. presented the corps with four silver bugles. This parade was held at the Alameda only a few days before the Commanding Officer Major Roberts was due to leave to take on another appointment and the occasion was used to photograph the whole battalion with the outgoing Commanding Officer and also featuring the new bugles.

There were numerous concerts organized at the Theatre Royal under the expertise of Captain Nemesio Cortez. One such event was on 31 January 1916, when a concert was heralded in the programme as 'A Grand Vocal and Instrumental Concert organized by the Gibraltar Volunteer Corps.' Various members of the GVC took part, plus family members, providing dances, songs and recitals. The Royal Welsh Fusiliers and the Royal Army Medical Corps put forward participants and the full band of the Royal Artillery took part.

The Gibraltar Chronicle of 1 February 1916 carried the following report:

> The programme was a splendid one, and it was generally acknowledged that it was one of the best heard in Gibraltar of late. We have not space to go into the details of all the excellent and diversified items so ably rendered by our talented musical amateurs.
>
> The lady vocalists included Mrs O'Donnell, Mrs H. Podesta, Mrs Alderson, Mrs Pincho, Mrs Southby, Miss L. Porral, and Miss D. Cooper who delighted everyone with their artistic interpretations. Capt Porter and Capt N. P. Cortez also gave valuable vocal aid. Miss T. Imossi's recitation was also greatly appreciated. The Spanish dancing of Misses Imossi and Misses Isola delighted the audience. Little Miss Isola, as an encore sang, 'Hallo, hallo who's your lady friend' (Dressed as a Tommy) in a fascinating manner. Encores were frequent during the evening. Last but not least we must mention the really fine playing of the Royal Artillery Orchestra.

In early September 1916 the corps marched out of their barracks at Wellington Front and continued down to North Front to carry out exercises, at company level, against a simulated enemy. They dug in at the east side of the isthmus near Eastern Beach. The exercise went well and on returning to Wellington Front later in the day they were congratulated by their commander Major T. F. Cooper.

The Corps on parade at the Alameda, October 1915.

During the First World War there was very little enemy activity in Gibraltar. The one exception was the engagement of a German submarine in the Bay of Gibraltar by some of the Rock's batteries, particularly Devil's Gap Battery, on New Year's Eve, 1916. As a result, the Gibraltar Volunteer Corps was never tested in combat. However, they played their part alongside the regular garrison during these war years. On one occasion, they rendered valuable assistance in clearing a major landslide on the East Side, above Catalan Bay.

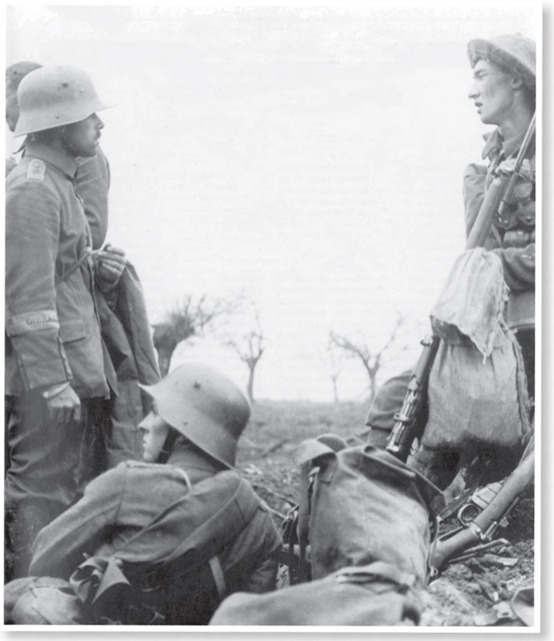
Gibraltar on the Western Front 1914–18

Despite the fact that Gibraltar played only a minor role in the First World War, it did make an appearance on the Western Front – albeit in a very peculiar way.

In 1714, the reigning Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg, George Louis of the House of Hannover, ascended the throne of Great Britain as George I. As a consequence, the northern German duchy of Brunswick-Lüneburg was joined in a personal union with Great Britain. This union lasted until 1837, when differing succession laws resulted in Queen Victoria ascending the British throne and her uncle Ernest Augustus that of Hannover. During the personal union, troops from the German duchy served the British Crown in many battles and campaigns. One brigade, consisting of three battalions, was sent from Germany to Gibraltar in 1775 in order to free British troops for the conflict in North America. The first years in Gibraltar were very pleasant for the troops, but they then had to take part in the defence of Gibraltar during the Great Siege between 1779 and 1783. It was only in 1784 that the three battalions arrived back in Germany, after nine years on the Rock. In honour of their performance during the Great Siege George III decreed that the three battalions be allowed to carry the name 'Gibraltar Battalion' and they were awarded special Colours

showing the Rock and carrying the inscription 'With Elliot Glory and Victory'. The soldiers and non-commissioned officers were also entitled to wear a blue ribbon on the cuff of the right arm, displaying in golden letters the word 'Gibraltar'.

In the turbulence of 19th-century Germany this honour was soon abandoned and forgotten. However, in 1901, the German Emperor William II renewed the honour. Two regiments of the Prussian Army, the 73rd and 79th, which stood in the tradition of the battalions that had fought at Gibraltar, were again awarded the blue ribbon. As a consequence, these German regiments fought in the First World War proudly displaying the blue and gold 'Gibraltar' ribbon on the cuff.



A soldier of the 73rd Füsilier Regiment from Hannover taken prisoner by British troops on 31 July 1917 during the battle for Pilckem Ridge in the Ypres salient. The Gibraltar ribbon is visible on his sleeve. (Imperial War Museum, Q 5724)

The Gibraltar Volunteer Corps' marching drill.

On a number of occasions the GVC was employed in the transfer of wounded soldiers who had been transported to Gibraltar in hospital ships to the Naval Hospital. The first time was on 7 November 1915 when the hospital ship Somalia arrived with war wounded. Each company was detailed to provide four NCOs and nine men. Later in the year a detail appeared in Company Orders requiring the companies to provide three NCOs and 25 men to carry out a similar assignment.

After the first tasking on the Somalia the principal medical officer on board, Surgeon Commander Sutcliffe, and two Royal Army Medical Corps officers visited the Commanding Officer and expressed their admiration for the way the men of the corps had behaved. To honour this occasion the Commanding Officer issued a special order of the day saying he admired the manly and humane spirit shown and ending with… 'The whole of Gibraltar will be proud of the men of their citizen army.'

A regular but unusual duty carried out by the corps was to provide armed pickets during the Algeciras and La Linea Fairs. For this duty only those men who had progressed from .22 to .303 calibre shots were selected. The duty parties consisted of 11 non-commissioned officers and men commanded by an officer. They paraded on their allocated days dressed in khaki, with ammunition pouches and armed with Lee Enfield rifles and bayonets, to be inspected by the Adjutant prior to going on duty.

In March 1917 following a heavy storm and subsequent landslides the GVC was once again in action assisting the civil agencies. The work parties, which were first made available on 24 March and continued until early May, reported daily at 1600 hrs on weekdays and then at 1500 hrs on Sundays. They removed sand and rocks from dwellings and roads and, under the guidance of the DORE North, assisted in rebuilding some of the roads.

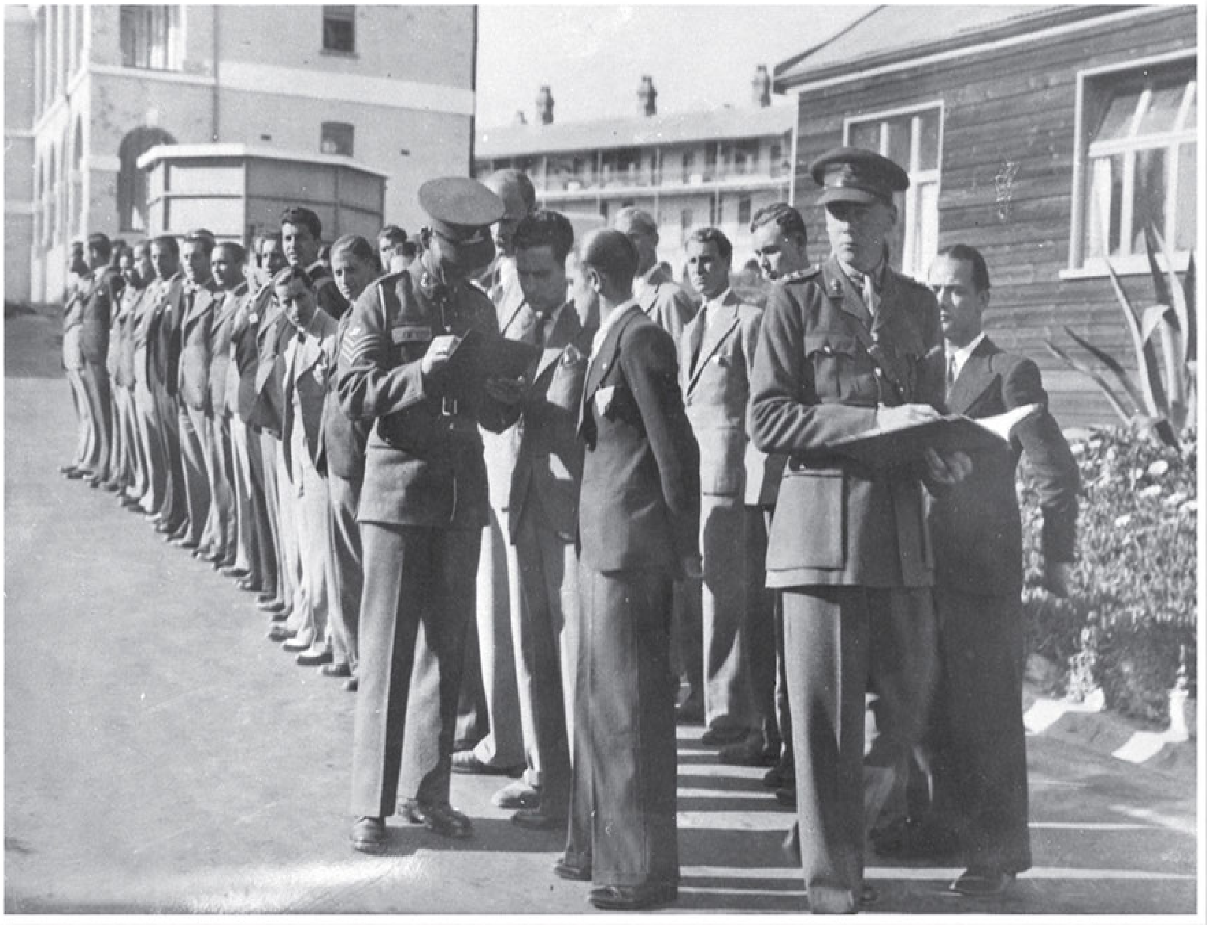
A coal heavers' strike in August 1918 resulted in members of the GVC taking over these duties. Volunteers were requested and, as a result, an officer and an average of 14 men per day worked over a period of six days, heaving coal. An aggregate of 811 tons of coal was shifted over this period.

With the cessation of hostilities in November 1918 came the inevitable threat of disbandment; from the start the ordinance had made it clear that the GVC was to be formed only for the duration of the war. This step was probably not unwelcome by most members of the corps at that time: after the end of the war it was obvious that internal and external interest in the corps was waning. A threat to Gibraltar had not materialized during the war and the corps' resources and training facilities had been limited throughout the war. Thus, when the corps was finally disbanded on 1 February 1920 it was not done to the deep regret of the Gibraltarians. Despite this fact the corps played an important role in the military history of the Rock and the tradition of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment. As the Governor General Sir Herbert Miles said in his address to the volunteers on 3 July 1915, the corps had come into being not because of any official demand but as a result of their patriotic fervour and of their love and respect for the Crown.

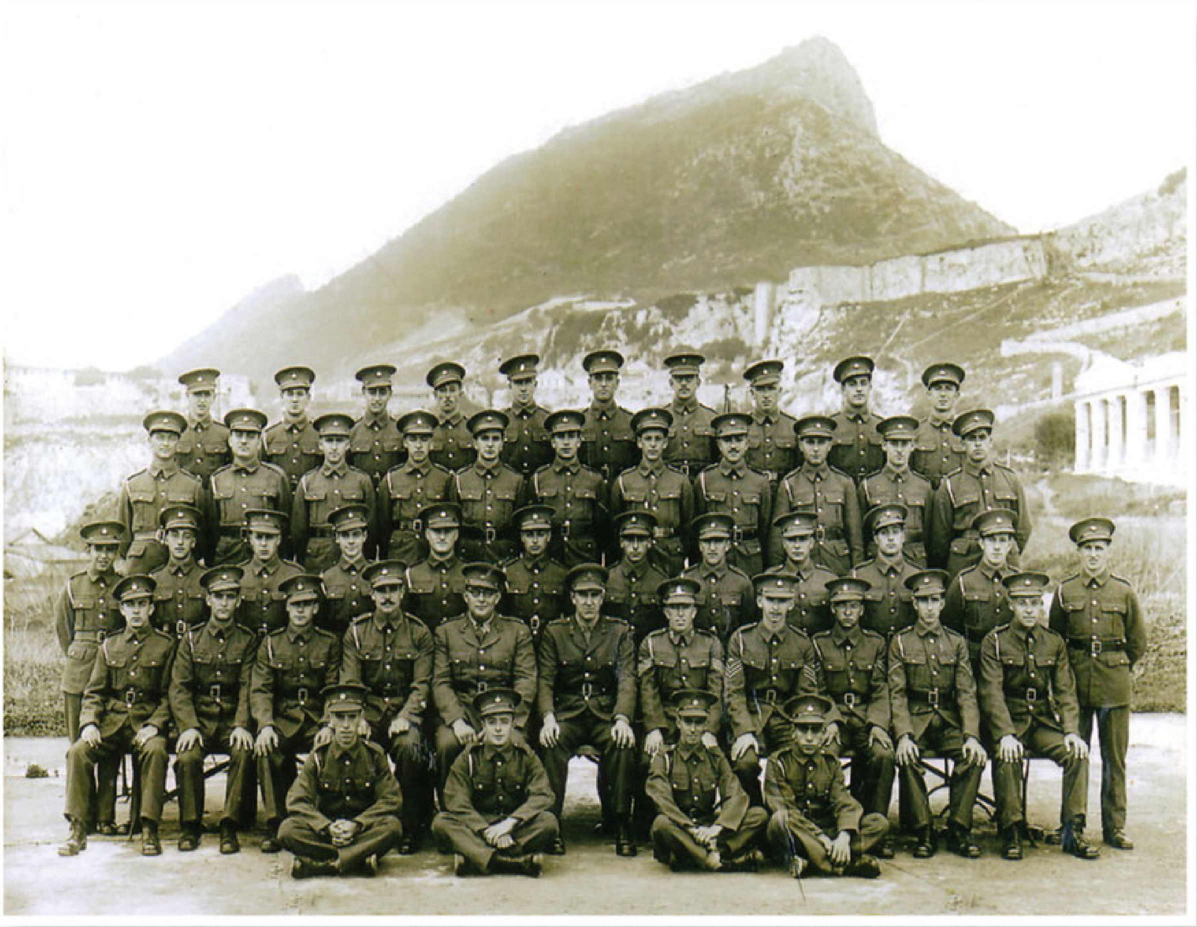
CHAPTER THREE

THE GIBRALTAR DEFENCE FORCE: 1939–58

GIBRALTAR



The 1st intake of the Gibraltar Defence Force, 13 April 1939.



GDF anti-aircraft section, 1939.

THE FORMATION OF THE UNIT

The world after the First World War was not a settled place. The legacy of the war and the rise of Fascism and Communism in the 1920s and 1930s in Europe created dark clouds over the continent.

In Gibraltar, early in 1938, the Governor General Sir Charles Harrington was already in touch with the War Office regarding the possibility of training Gibraltarians for wartime duties. The initial plan was to form a uniformed labour force, but this did not materialize and the idea developed into a scheme where men would train in peacetime with a view to joining the ranks of the Royal Artillery in an emergency. The plans were delayed by the inevitable concerns of conditions of pay and service. Any integration of this sort was bound to lead to problems, and so it did. For the rest of the year the colonial yoke slowed down the process, although in February 1939 the situation was given a new impetus and a fresh perspective by the arrival of the new Governor, General Sir William Ironside.

Ironside approached the question of Gibraltarian military service from a new angle; instead of the integration of individuals into the regular military forces on the Rock, he proposed that a local unit should be formed. The Governor estimated that he would need a force of just under 400 men, to include anti-aircraft gunners, artillerymen, transport, medical and signal sections. It was proposed that the men be allocated as follows:

anti-aircraft section	50
artillery section	118
signal section	39
transport section	100
medical section	88

Air raids were considered to be the most likely type of attack that Gibraltar would face in the event of war, and therefore money would be made available locally to fund the anti-aircraft unit. It was more difficult with the other sections: the Governor was already committed to building air-raid shelters and other associated works locally meaning that, unless the War Department were to foot the bill, the other sections would go unfunded.

The ordinance for the creation and maintenance of a defence force finally came into existence on 28 March 1939. This ordinance legalized the raising of a voluntary unit in Gibraltar which was to be known as the Gibraltar Defence Force (GDF). Approval from the War Office, in principle, was sent by cable on 6 July 1939 with the following provisions and comments:

Consideration to detail is still to come.

Financial approval is not yet available.

A set of financial rates for officers and men were suggested.

Officers four fifths, other ranks three quarters British rates.

Family allowance to be	Wife	10s – 0p
	1st child	2s – 6p
	2nd child	1s – 6p
	3rd child	1s – 0p

The Governor was not best pleased and a further cipher telegram was soon on its way to the War Office:

Consider family allowance rate inadequate in view of local cost of living. Again urge strongly two thirds British rate originally recommended in April. Also recommend kit and clothing allowance at ruling British rates. Unless these recommendations are approved recruiting will suffer which will necessitate replacement of GDF medical section by RAMC [Royal Army Medical Corps]. This could also affect other sections.

In April 1939 the first notices appeared asking for volunteers for a GDF anti-aircraft section. The notices stated that this unit would, if the need arose, be mobilized and form part of the Rock's defences. The notices requested volunteers to report to Fortress Headquarters, then at the site of the present Duke of Kent House. When the volume of volunteers became apparent, extra clerks were called in to deal with the numbers turning up.

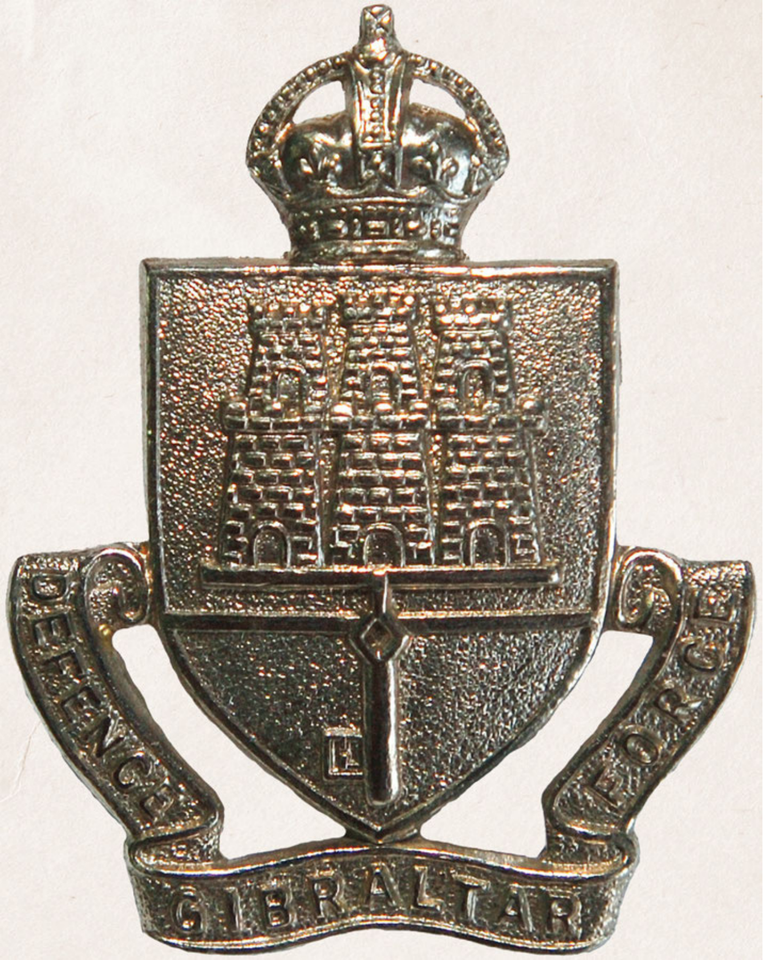
Following General Ironside's original estimate, 50 men were taken on and between March and April these 'first fifty' were embodied – but over 500 had volunteered for selection.

During this time, approval was being sought of the design of the GDF cap badge. Two similar designs had been submitted, both based on Gibraltar's coat of arms but with differently shaped scrolls. The firm J. R. Gaunt & Sons Ltd was commissioned to produce them and by the middle of the year the first sample was available for approval. Following the sanctioning of the preferred badge and its subsequent authorization, the first batch of 60 arrived on schedule in September, for the fledgling anti-aircraft section.

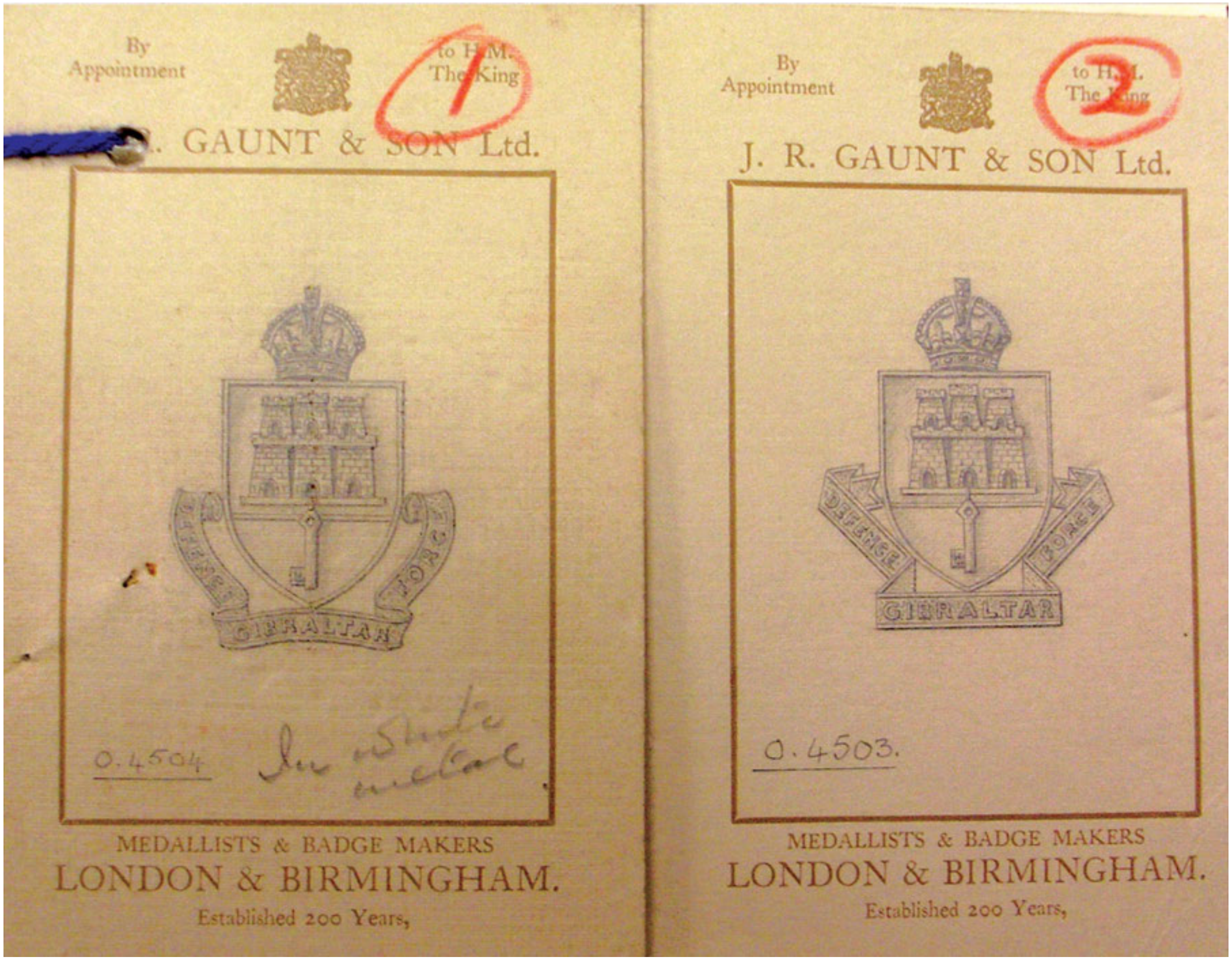
This section paraded for the first time on 28 April 1939. This parade was later established and still continues as the Regiment's Regimental Day. The men paraded in civilian clothes.

Field Marshal William Ironside

Field Marshal William Edmund Ironside, 1st Baron Ironside GCB, CMG, DSO (6 May 1880–22 September 1959) was a British military commander, Governor of Gibraltar and Chief of the Imperial General Staff during the first year of the Second World War. Ironside joined the Royal Artillery in 1899, and served throughout the Second Boer War. In the early years of the First World War he served on several staffs before he commanded a brigade on the Western Front in 1918. In 1919, he commanded the Allied intervention force in northern Russia, then an Allied force occupying Turkey, and finally a British force in Persia in 1921. After having served as the commandant of Staff College, Camberley, he commanded a division, and military districts in both Britain and India. In November 1938 he became Governor of Gibraltar. Under his tenure, the defences were strengthened and the garrison prepared for a long siege. He was also the driving force behind the establishment of the Gibraltar Defence Force. In May 1939, he was appointed Inspector-General of Overseas Forces, before being appointed Chief of the Imperial General Staff on 3 September 1939. At the end of May 1940 he was relieved of his command and made Commander-in-Chief Home Forces, responsible for anti-invasion defences and for commanding the army in the event of German landings. However, he served less than two months in this role before being replaced. After this, Ironside was promoted to field marshal, raised to the peerage as Baron Ironside, and then chose to retire to Morley Old Hall in Norfolk to write.


DEFENCE
FORCE
GIBRALTAR

Cap badge of the Gibraltar Defence Force.


By Appointment to H.M. The King
1
. GAUNT & SON Ltd.
DEFENSE FORCE
GIBRALTAR
0.4504
In white metal
MEDALLISTS & BADGE MAKERS
LONDON & BIRMINGHAM.
Established 200 Years,
By Appointment to H.M. The King
2
J. R. GAUNT & SON Ltd.
DEFENSE FORCE
GIBRALTAR
0.4503.
MEDALLISTS & BADGE MAKERS
LONDON & BIRMINGHAM.
Established 200 Years,

The two cap badge designs considered for the GDF.

After the swearing in, the day was spent with sergeants moving up and down the ranks teaching the men how to stand with military posture, how to turn as a drill movement, how to march and halt, and offering constant instruction on the rudiments of assuming a military bearing. It was, nevertheless, the first parade, the very start of the Regiment and worthy of being commemorated as Regimental Day. The first formal parade in public was the King's Birthday Parade on 8 June 1939.

Training was initially on a weekday evening and Sunday morning, but quickly increased to four drills a week. The special arms training was on two 3-inch hand-loaded guns, which were sited at Europa Point, close to where the present mosque stands. The training progressed well and by July a camp under canvas was held at Europa Point in the Brewery Crusher area, where the section fired the guns at towed targets for the first time. Conditions during the training camp were basic, with beds consisting of three wooden boards fitted over two low trestles, three blankets per person and a basic bolster. They were deployed in this area for two weeks. In addition to training on the guns the men were trained to defend the gun position with small arms. They also had to endured the all-time favourite activity for every soldier – drill. They trained hard for the first 12 days and the final two were dedicated to firing at a sleeve target towed by a Swordfish aircraft. This was their first shoot and they managed to shoot down two sleeves. Their instructors and the instructor in gunnery, Major S. Learmond, were delighted with the results as were, no doubt, the men.

The first 50 volunteers

This section was mobilized on 2 September 1939, manning 3-inch guns at 'Oil Tanks' Battery on the east side of the Rock:

1 Gunner Emilio Florian Alvarez

2 Sergeant Francis Azzopardi

3 Gunner John Azzopardi

4 Gunner Charles Baker

5 Sergeant Charles Bear

6 Bombardier Anthony Buttigieg

7 Sergeant Joseph Byrne

8 Bombardier Anthony Carreras

9 Gunner Orlando Charvetto

10 Sergeant John Wilson Coelho

11 Gunner Leslie Ernest Cook

12 Gunner Joseph Dotto

13 Lance Bombardier James Arthur Edwards

14 Gunner John Fa

15 Gunner John Fane

16 Bombardier Nicholas Ferrary

17 Bombardier Sergius Francis

18 Sergeant Joseph Gareze

19 Lance Bombardier Antony Gareze

20 Company Quarter Master Solomon David Garson

21 Sergeant Walter Harold Gordon

22 Bombardier John Jackson Hamilton

23 Lance Bombardier Louis Jurado

24 Gunner Francis Linares

25 Bombardier Francis Lopez

26 Gunner Gerald John Martinez

27 Gunner Francis De Asis Morro

28 Gunner Aurelio Montegriffo

29 Sergeant Charles Albert Norton

30 Gunner William Pedroz

31 Warrant Officer Class 2 Robert John Peliza

32 Gunner Alfred Pozo

33 Sergeant George Albert Prescott

34 Gunner Emilio Richardson

35 Gunner Victor Risso

36 Bombardier Manuel Hugh Rodriguez

37 Lance Bombardier Victor Romero

38 Bombardier Adolphus James Russo

39 Lance Bombardier Andrew Arthur Ryan

40 Lance Bombardier Stephen Scovasso

41 Gunner Seymour Strange

42 Bombardier Hector Viale

43 Lance Bombardier Ernest John Yeo

44 Gunner Anthony Zarb

45 Lance Bombardier Saviour Falzun

46 Sergeant Hain Moses Garson

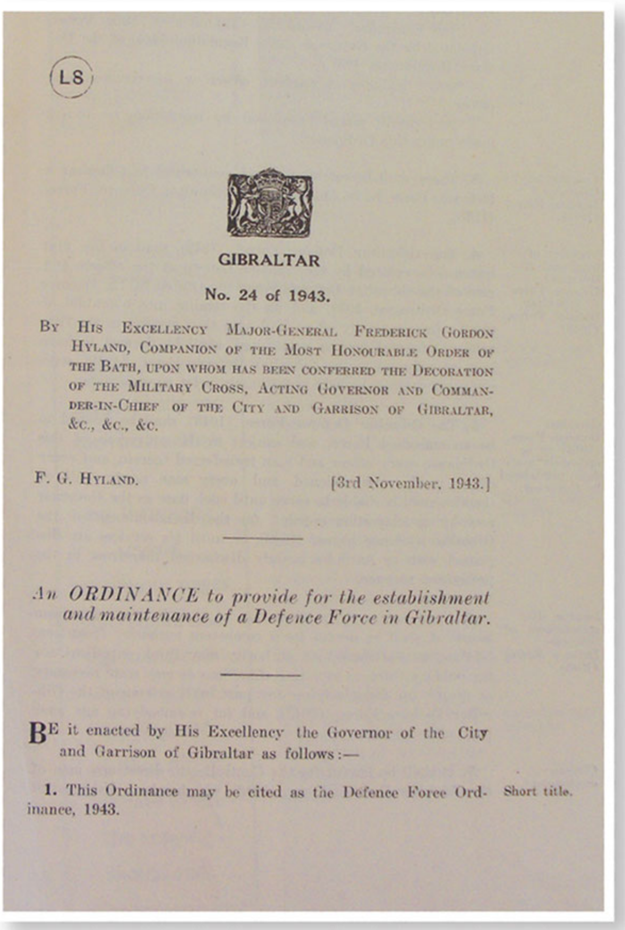
47 Gunner Richard Grech

48 Gunner Thomas Penalver

49 Gunner Anthony Peter De Pavia Rapozo

50 Sergeant William Thomson

The GDF on the march.



LS

GIBRALTAR

No. 24 of 1943.

BY HIS EXCELLENCY MAJOR-GENERAL FREDERICK GORDON HYLAND, COMPANION OF THE MOST HONOURABLE ORDER OF THE BATH, UPON WHOM HAS BEEN CONFERRED THE DECORATION OF THE MILITARY CROSS, ACTING GOVERNOR AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE CITY AND GARRISON OF GIBRALTAR, &C., &C., &C.

F. G. HYLAND. [3rd November, 1943.]

An ORDINANCE to provide for the establishment and maintenance of a Defence Force in Gibraltar.

BE it enacted by His Excellency the Governor of the City and Garrison of Gibraltar as follows:—

1. This Ordinance may be cited as the Defence Force Ordinance, 1943. Short title.

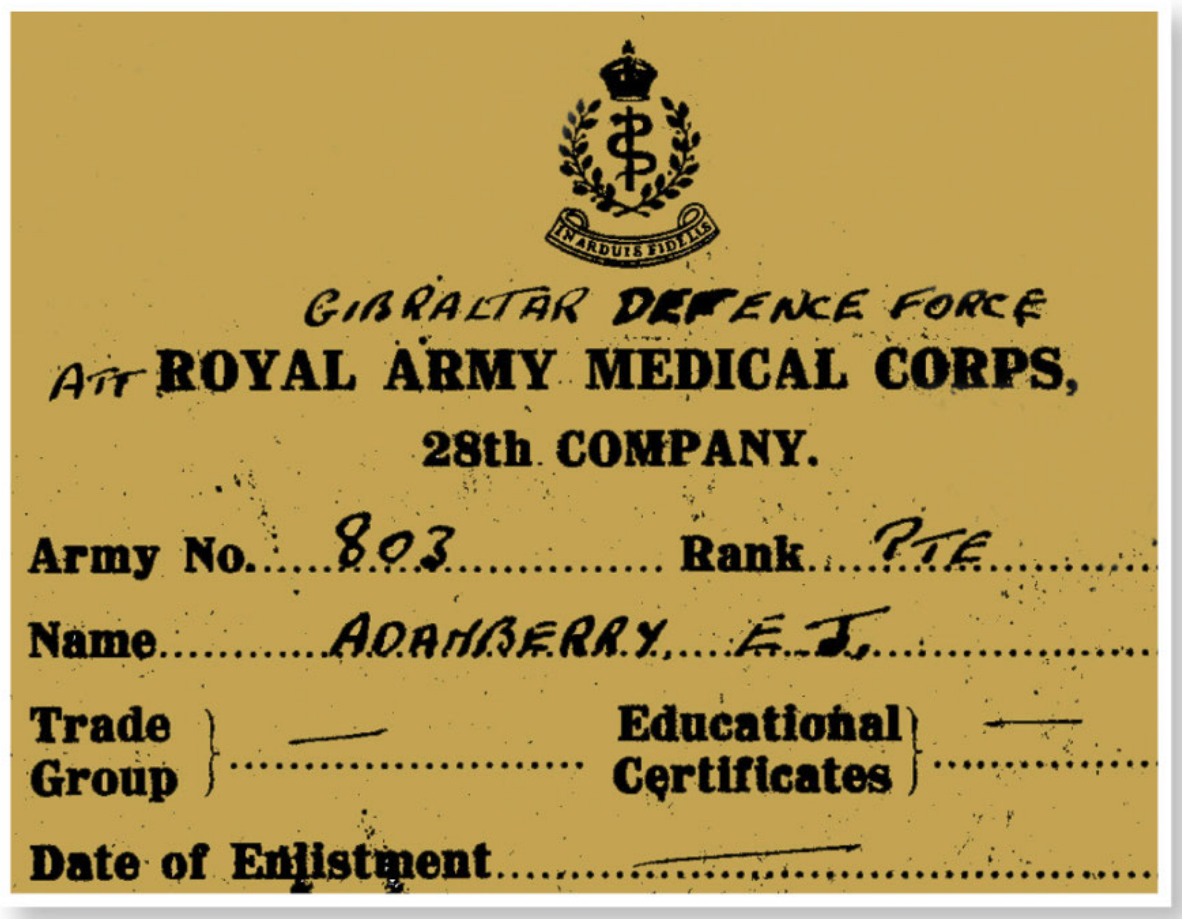
GDF camp under canvas, Brewery Crusher, Europa Point.

Defence Force Ordinance, 1943.

The ordinance had provided that, in the case of an emergency, the force could be embodied by proclamation for as long as the Governor should deem necessary. This proclamation came on 2 September 1939 and as the volunteer members were found to be proficient enough to be engaged in full-time service and detailed to man the guns at ‘Oil Tanks’ Battery, the proclamation was never revoked and was, in effect, superseded by the Defence Force Ordinance in 1943.

Before this, in August 1940, the Military Service Ordinance was enacted. It provided that the Governor could direct by proclamation that all physically fit male British subjects, not engaged in essential work and between the age of 18 and 22, should become liable to be called up for military service. The ordinance further provided that any person who became liable for service by virtue of this proclamation could be called up for service in any of the armed forces of the colony including the Gibraltar Defence Force. A proclamation to this effect was issued on 18 October 1940, but in reality no men were to be called up until 1944. This was very likely a reflection on the number of volunteers who had come forward in the preceding years; and the members of the public who continued to volunteer. By August 1939, when war was felt to be imminent, the establishment had been increased by further voluntary recruitment. Additional sections were formed which would serve with the coast artillery, the medical corps and signals corps. It was the anti-aircraft section however, which was to retain its individual identity and which was later to be recognized as the main building block from which the Gibraltar Regiment was finally born.

General Ironside (centre) and staff at Gibraltar Defence Force Recruiting Centre in 1939.



IN ARDUIS FIDELIS

GIBRALTAR DEFENCE FORCE

ATT **ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS,**

28th COMPANY.

Army No. 803 **Rank** PTE

Name ADAMBERRY E.J.

Trade Group — **Educational Certificates** —

Date of Enlistment —

E. J. Adamberry's papers showing his attachment to the Royal Army Medical Corps from the GDF.

On 3 September 1939, the day Britain and France declared war on Germany, the following telegram was received from the War Office:

1. Formation of Gibraltar Defence Force approved. Following rates of pay and allowances for all sections, on embodiment.

2. Officers, four fifths British rates. Other ranks pay three quarters British rates. Family allowance weekly rates. Wife ten shillings, twelve shillings and sixpence, fourteen shillings and fifteen shillings for wife with one, two, three children respectively. Add one shilling for each additional child. Second. Personnel already enlisted may continue British rates during the recent engagement.

3. Peace conditions to be fixed later.

The Governor had not had his way with his demands for higher rates pay, but despite this the volunteers were established, eager and ready to play their part.

THE EARLY YEARS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The GDF war diary for 2 September 1939 reports the following:

This section was mobilised on 2nd September 1939, manning a two 3-inch QF 20 cwt gun battery at Oil Tanks under the Command of Lieutenant R S P Dawson R.A. The section was attached to 19 AA Battery R.A. commanded by Major Sir Thomas L H Roberts Bart R.A.

After this initial mobilization the section settled into a routine during which promotions and changes of command took place. Towards the end of September Sergeant Thomson was gazetted second lieutenant, Sergeant Norton was appointed sergeant major and Bombardier Gareze promoted to sergeant. Among the junior non-commissioned officers, Lance-Bombardier Prescott was promoted to bombardier, acting Lance-Bombardier Gordon to lance-bombardier and Gunner Charvetto to lance-bombardier. On 20 September Second Lieutenant A. J. L. Gache RA, a Gibraltarian who had joined the supplementary Reserve in England, took over command from Lieutenant R. S. P. Dawson RA.

During this period the section moved location a number of times. The first move, in early October, was to Detached Mole Battery manning another two 3-inch guns, and in November it moved back to Oil Tanks Battery on the east side of the Rock. Shortly after this, on 7 December, Second Lieutenant A. J. L. Gache RA handed over to Second Lieutenant W. Thomson from the GDF.

Willie Thomson as lance corporal, taken before December 1939.

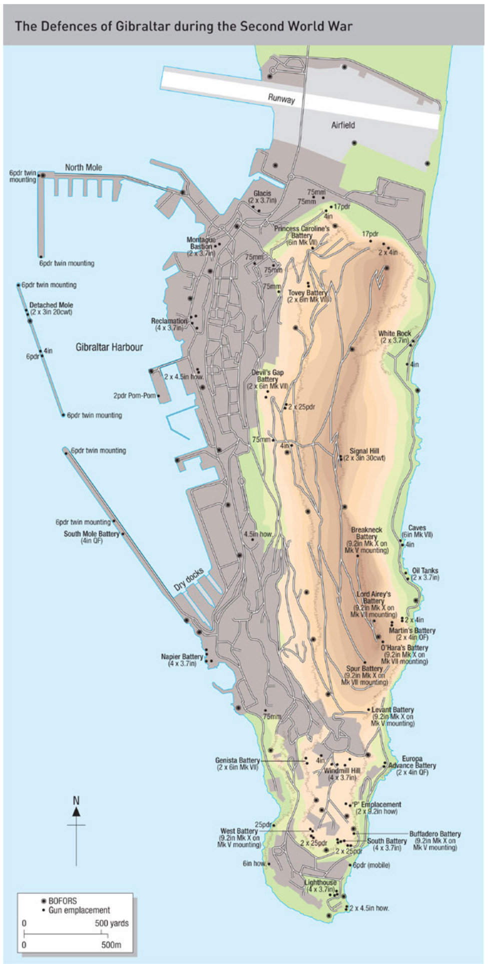
The section had not yet seen any serious action but they had come together as an efficient fighting group. Recent training had qualified the soldiers on all the necessary equipment and they were now commanded by an officer commissioned from their own ranks. By the end of 1939, the section strength was one officer and 47 other ranks with many others volunteering to come in.

As part of the regular redeployment of gun positions, a further move to Detached Mole Battery followed in January 1940. Early in this deployment the section was hit by atrocious weather conditions which were particularly felt in the exposed Detached Mole. Two boxes of four rounds each of high explosives and shrapnel were swept into the sea, and the men worked hard to safeguard the rest of the ammunition and equipment. By early February the GDF section at Detached Mole moved to Montague Bastion and Detached Mole Battery was handed over to No 1 Section 19th Anti-Aircraft Battery Royal Artillery. The GDF section then went on leave until 19 February after which it took over at Montague Bastion.

There followed a period of more training and practice shoots, which normally took place from Oil Tanks Battery, and a further move on 20 April, to Napier of Magdala Battery followed by another back to Montague Bastion two months later. At this point, on 26 June the section was visited by the Governor and Commander-in-Chief Lieutenant-General Sir Clive Liddell and General the Viscount Gort VC.

A GDF non-commissioned officer, Lito Rodrigues, remembers some of the routines:

We used to move the guns quite often, and when we did so, we camouflaged the emplacements to make it look as if the guns were still there. Moving the guns was not always easy, in particular the moves to Signal Hill. We used the rings which you can still see on the sides of the roads leading up the Rock to secure the equipment as we worked our way up. It was all done with blocks and tackle and a lot of sweat. We had tractors to do the pulling but the shifting of the enormous wooden blocks was all manpower. We had to build the structures onto which the equipment was lifted every time we came to any kind of obstruction. This was all done under the direction of the Master Gunner.



The Defences of Gibraltar during the Second World War

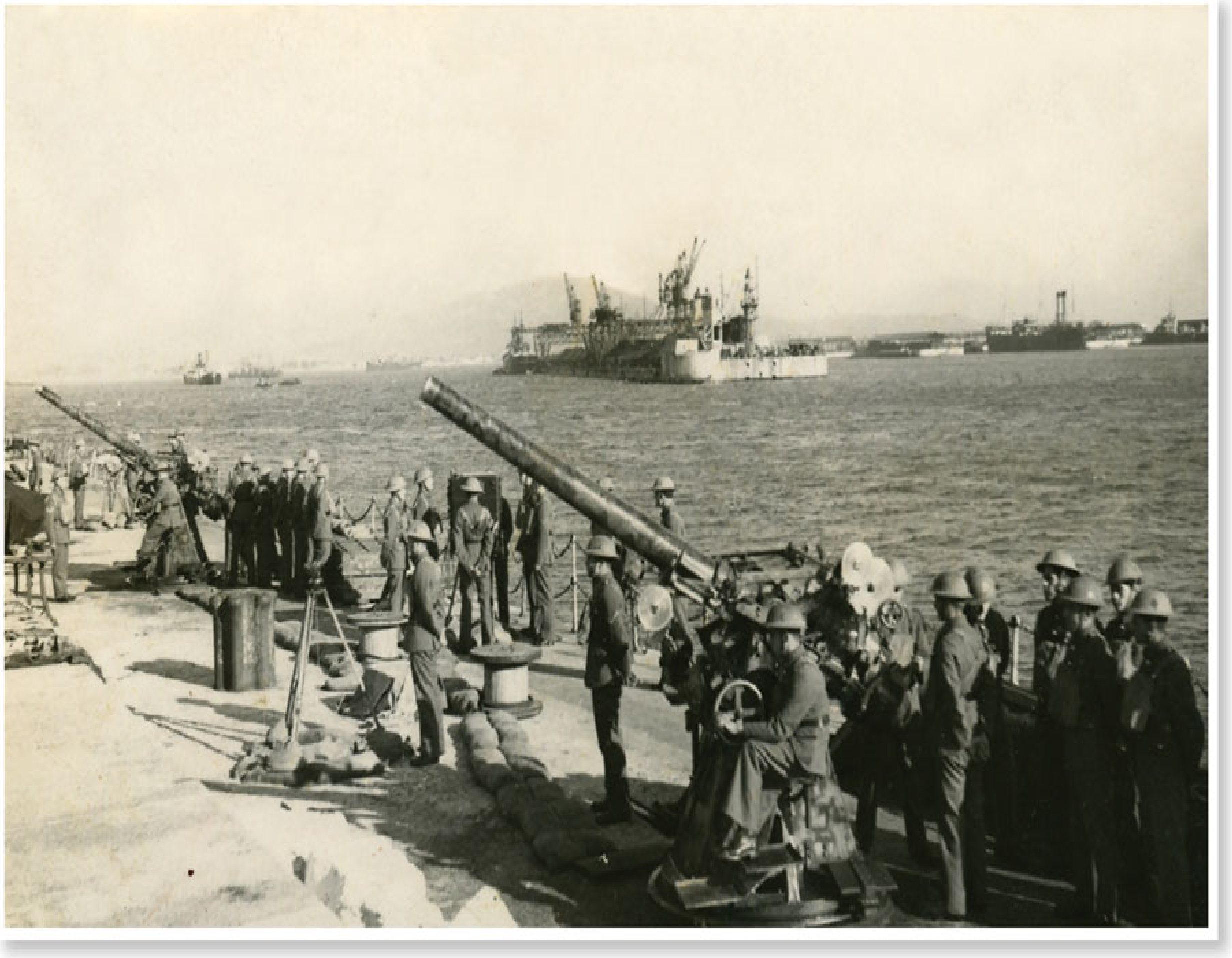
Runway
Airfield
North Mole
6pdr twin mounting
6pdr twin mounting
6pdr twin mounting
Detached Mole (2 x 3in 20cwt)
4in
6pdr
Gibraltar Harbour
6pdr twin mounting
6pdr twin mounting
6pdr twin mounting
South Mole Battery (4in QF)
Dry docks
Glacis (2 x 3.7in)
75mm
75mm
17pdr
4in
Princess Caroline's Battery (6in Mk VII)
17pdr
2 x 4in
Montague Bastion (2 x 3.7in)
75mm
75mm
75mm
Tovey Battery (2 x 6in Mk VII)
Reclamation (4 x 3.7in)
White Rock (2 x 3.7in)
4in
2 x 4.5in how.
2pdr Pom-Pom
Devil's Gap Battery (2 x 6in Mk VII)
2 x 25pdr
75mm
4in
Signal Hill (2 x 3in 30cwt)
4.5in how.
Breakneck Battery (9.2in Mk X on Mk V mounting)
Caves (6in Mk VII)
4in
Oil Tanks (2 x 3.7in)
Lord Airey's Battery (9.2in Mk X on Mk VII mounting)
2 x 4in
Martin's Battery (2 x 4in QF)
O'Hara's Battery (9.2in Mk X on Mk VII mounting)
Napier Battery (4 x 3.7in)
Spur Battery (9.2in Mk X on Mk VII mounting)
75mm
Levant Battery (9.2in Mk X on Mk V mounting)
Genista Battery (2 x 6in Mk VII)
4in
Windmill Hill (4 x 3.7in)
Europa Advance Battery (2 x 4in QF)
'P' Emplacement (2 x 9.2in how)
N
25pdr
West Battery (9.2in Mk X on Mk V mounting)
2 x 25pdr
2 x 25pdr
South Battery (4 x 3.7in)
Buffadero Battery (9.2in Mk X on Mk V mounting)
6in how.
6pdr (mobile)
Lighthouse (4 x 3.7in)
2 x 4.5in how.
BOFORS
Gun emplacement
0
500 yards
0
500m

3-inch 20 cwt anti-aircraft gun

The gun was based on a pre-First World War Vickers naval 3-inch (76 mm) gun with modifications specified by the War Office in 1914. The 3-inch 20 cwt anti-aircraft gun became the standard anti-aircraft gun used in the home defence of the United Kingdom against German airships and bombers and on the Western Front in the war. It was also common on British warships in the First World War and submarines in the Second World War. The designation 20 cwt referred to the weight of the barrel and breech, to differentiate it from other '3-inch' guns (1 cwt = 1 hundredweight = 112 lb, hence the barrel and breech together weighed 2,250 lb).

At the beginning of the Second World War in 1939, Britain possessed approximately 500 of these guns. Initially most were in the heavy anti-aircraft (HAA) role until replaced by the new 3.7-inch gun. Some were deployed as light anti-aircraft guns (LAA) for airfield defence, being transferred to the RAF Regiment when this was formed in 1942, until more 40mm Bofors guns arrived. 120 were in France with the British Expeditionary Force in November 1939, compared with 48 of the modern Quick Fire 3.7-inch AA gun.

In 1941, 100 of the obsolete guns were converted to become the 3-inch 16 cwt anti-tank gun, firing a 12.5 lb (5.7 kg) armour-piercing shell. They were mainly deployed in home defence.



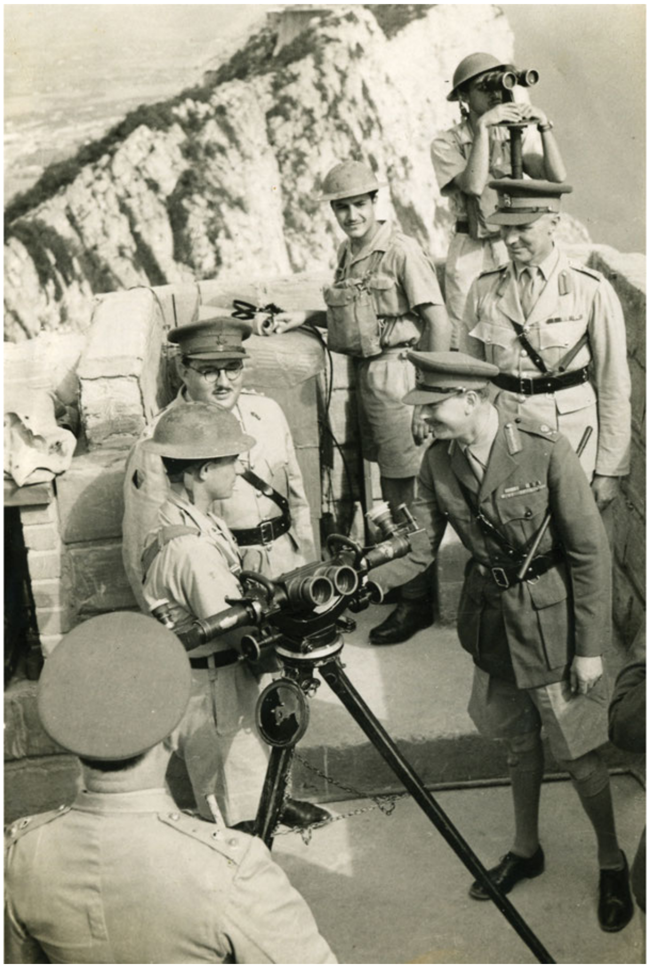
South Mole Battery defending the harbour of Gibraltar.

By early July 1940 some minor raids started to take place over the Rock, mainly by French aircraft. After the defeat of France by the German Wehrmacht in June 1940 the British were worried that the Germans could get their hands on the French fleet which was stationed in North Africa. In order to prevent this from happening, the Royal Navy bombarded the French Navy at its base at Mers-el-Kébir, on the coast of what was then French Algeria, on 3 July 1940. The raid resulted in the deaths of 1,297 French servicemen, the sinking of a battleship and the damaging of five other ships. As a consequence of this action the Vichy government severed diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom and launched air raids on Gibraltar. On 5 July three alarms sounded between 0130 and 0600 hrs and bombs were seen dropping into the sea. The section could not engage from their elevated position, because the targets were diving to a very low height. Two days later they engaged a French Potez aircraft that was approaching the Rock from a south-easterly direction. During this engagement one gun jammed after the first round and the other fired three rounds as the aircraft disappeared behind clouds. Lito Rodriguez remembered the incident:

Something I will always remember was an incident on my gun when a shell jammed in the breech. Sergio Martinez was the Sgt and I was the Cpl. When he was not around I would take over the duties of No1. It seemed a crude procedure as the shell had to be forced out of the breech end by inserting a tool down the barrel then hammering it to force the shell out. It was not a popular drill and one had to know the procedure well. This one happened during an air raid so things moved very quickly.

Napier Battery with the 'first 50 volunteers' and other military personnel, 1939.

On 26 July Gibraltar was raided again. About 15 heavy bombs fell onto the catchment area and buildings on the southern end of the Rock. Three civilians and a Royal Artillery gunner were killed; there were also several other minor injuries.



Signal Hill 1941. Governor and Commander-in-Chief Lieutenant-General Sir Clive Liddell visiting the anti-aircraft section of the GDF. Captain W. Thomson is standing in the centre wearing glasses.

August started quietly: over the first few days a few aircraft, operating singly on reconnaissance missions, were turned away by anti-aircraft fire. As the days progressed, however, the raids began to intensify. An entry in the GDF War Diary for 20 August records the destruction of an enemy aircraft:

Third bombing raid over Gibraltar. First plane came over at 2330 hrs and was picked up by searchlights at the moment of bomb release. It kept a steady course and AA fire was opened. Plane was hit and brought down in the Strait. This plane released bombs which dropped in the harbour.

An intelligence summary reports that the plane dropped three bombs; the tug St Omar was slightly damaged but there were no casualties reported on the tug or elsewhere. The tailpiece and one wing were salvaged and the plane was identified as an Italian Savoia 79. A crew member is reported to have bailed out but no known survivors were found.

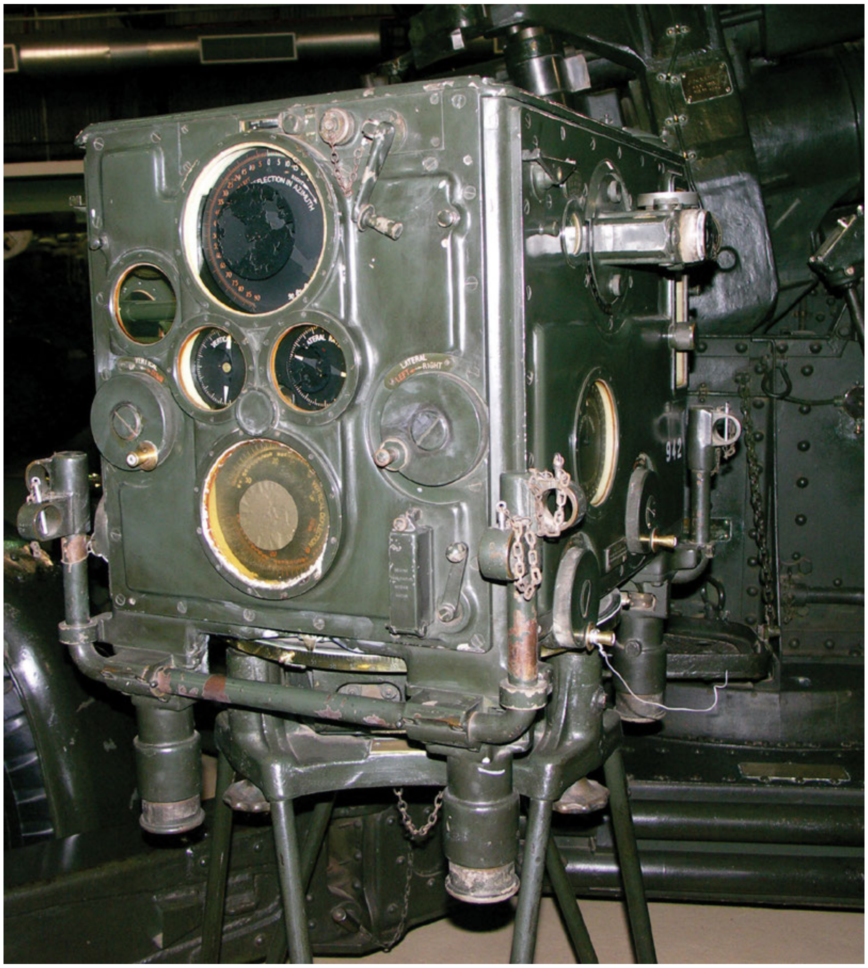
Mr J. Thomson, father of Second Lieutenant W. Thomson, who was serving in the section, donated £100 for the part the section played on the night of the 20th. The donation was distributed among members of the section. Lito Rodrigues remembered:

> I was also involved when we shot down the Italian Savoia Machetti. We had two planes caught by the searchlights and one could be seen to have been hit. I was on the predictor during this incident. I had some bits from that plane which had been recovered from the sea but unfortunately I have lost them since. The father of 2/Lt W Thomson donated £100.00 to the section … a lot of money in those days. What a party we had!

On 1 September 1940 10th Anti-Aircraft Regiment Royal Artillery ceased to exist and as a result 19 Anti-Aircraft Battery, together with the GDF section, was incorporated as an additional section within 82nd Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment. On the following day Lieutenant R. L. Whitmore, Royal Artillery, the Commanding Officer of 82nd HAA Regiment, visited the GDF section at Signal Hill Battery. The 82nd HAA Regiment had been moved, together with their guns, from Norway to Gibraltar in an operation commanded by the previous Governor, General Ironside, and the reinforcement was a welcome improvement to the Rock's defences. A further change took place on 9 March 1941 when the GDF anti-aircraft section (Signal Hill) was incorporated into 256 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery commanded by Major E. N. C. Manley.

Predictor

During the 1920s Vickers developed the Vickers Predictor, an electro-mechanical computer. The Predictor could aim a gun at an aircraft based on simple inputs like the observed speed and the angle to the target. Such devices had been used on ships for gunnery control for some time, and versions such as the Vickers Predictor were available for larger anti-aircraft guns intended to be used against high-altitude bombers.



A Number 1 Mark III Predictor, which was used with the QF 3.7-inch AA gun which the GDF used from 1942 onwards.

For the rest of March and April 1941 a considerable amount of practice firing and simulated air-raid practices took place from Gibraltar, with the first day of heavy anti-aircraft practice from Signal Hill taking place on 27 March. Shooting at a 'burst target' was scheduled to start at 1530 hrs. Just before the practice however, a Glen Martin aircraft with French markings approached the Rock with the intention of carrying out a reconnaissance. The Predictor drums were replaced by drums of fuse 199, and four rounds were fired by Signal Hill when the plane was on a bearing of 5 degrees. The following day, practice resumed, with 81 rounds fired at a sleeve target towed by a Swordfish.

The section’s war diary recorded events as they happened, but the men’s experience was also shaped by the garrison’s preparations for possible eventualities, including the – ultimately unrealized – threat of gas attack. A report on the vulnerability of Gibraltar to gas attack, concluded that such an attack, either by spraying or from shells, was more likely to occur on a calm day. This was because in strong wind, the mass of the Rock would have caused distortion to gas clouds making it difficult to work out possible points of impact for shells, and even more so for a release area for gas spray. The garrison was wary of a further type of chemical attack – the poisoning of the water supply. This could be achieved by bombing the water catchments area and contaminating it with mustard gas. It was thought that in the event of a suspected attack, this situation could be controlled by diverting and discarding an initial quantity of water then carrying out chemical tests on the next batch of water. Attacks with soluble arsenates were considered much more serious: if dropped on a dry surface, they could remain in place until dissolved by rain, posing a much more persistent threat. Sergeant C. Norton remembered the local measures taken at the gun positions:

> We practised the defence of our gun positions; we also practised our defence measures against gas attacks. We always had a gas sentry who would patrol our area for some hours everyday with his telltale bit of litmus paper at the end of a stick! Each position would have two spotters constantly deployed on these tasks.

A heavy anti-aircraft practice should have taken place just before the end of March, but units of the Western Mediterranean Fleet were attacked off the east side of Gibraltar by French Glen Martin aircraft and the garrison went on to maximum alert, as a follow-up attack was expected on the Rock. This attack, however, never materialized.

In 1941 the tenure of Governor Lieutenant-General Sir Clive Liddell, who had taken over from General Ironside in July 1939, was coming to an end. There were a number of matters he wished to conclude before his departure. Above all other concerns he must have dwelled on the threat of invasion – he gave the threat of attack and his concentration on the work on defences as the reason he was unable to write the report on the fortress that he had intended to produce during his tenure. He nevertheless prepared some notes which he hoped would be of value when the time came to consider the future organization of the naval base and fortress. They are partly quoted and partly referred to below because they give an insight into the situation in Gibraltar at the time, as a fortress with a colonial population. It is interesting, because the conflict between the military and the civilian population makes it easier to understand the limitations faced by the Gibraltar Defence Force caught in a colonial environment fighting side by side with regular British troops.

At the beginning of the war in September 1939, Gibraltar was practically undefended. It had Coast Defence Batteries installed capable of dealing with bombardment by one or two cruisers, and six-pounder Duplex guns capable of dealing with Coastal Motorboat raids on the harbour. The possibility of attack from the mainland was ignored altogether. Anti-Aircraft defences were practically nonexistent and there were no defences against landings in the harbour or on the beaches. The garrison was insufficient to man even the armament which had been installed.

This already bleak picture turned even worse:

During the last fifty years many military sites of batteries, casemates, buildings etc. were not occupied by the military and so were leased for other purposes. At the outbreak of the war when these W.D. properties were required, much difficulty was experienced in obtaining them. The occupants had acquired almost (squatters’) rights and in many cases no alternative accommodation could be found for them… Similarly during the last fifty years, many encroachments had been allowed to be erected on these sites, which interfered seriously with the defences of the Fortress, and their removal was met with great, and often insuperable, difficulties. For example, on the Western beach many corrugated iron buildings, workshops, stables, etc. had been erected and some 400 people inhabited these buildings. In order to demolish these buildings, which interfered seriously with the field of fire, temporary huts had to be erected on the North Front, in a locality only slightly less objectionable, but the only available site.

He then went on to discuss the inadequate garrison and the colony:

During the first nine months of the war, progress on the defences was slow owing to the lack of skilled labour and the necessity of supplying accommodation for the increased garrison. It was only when Italy entered the war and France collapsed that skilled labour in sufficient quantity began to be made available for the rapid construction of fully essential defences. By that time the work had to be carried out with the greatest possible speed and on a hand-to-mouth programme as it was never certain how much time would be available before an attack against the Fortress might be launched… The civilian population of the Colony of Gibraltar since 1844 has varied from 15,000 to 20,000 in 1900 and in September 1939 amounted to approximately 22,500 including some 2,000 Spanish refugees. In the past there has been a steady emigration to Spain, South America, Tangier and other countries, but latterly these outlets had been stopped and the result had been that the population of Gibraltar, which had already been overcrowded, has been increasing at an alarming rate. It is obvious therefore, that when peace reigns again, one of the first problems which will have to be tackled, and will have to be tackled immediately, is what is to be done with the surplus population on the Rock. If the Rock is to remain a Naval Base whose establishments requires constant expansion and now include a seaplane base, and if the Rock is to be defended, the colony must be strictly limited to the requirements of Dockyard and Fortress, personnel for the maintenance of services, shops, etc. but all other traders and non-essential services should be strictly excluded. I estimate that the maximum number of civilians for whom accommodation can be made available without interfering with the Naval Base and Fortress is 10,000, including males, females and children, but this requires further careful consideration. The surplus must therefore be transferred to another colony and this number must, on no account be exceeded… As it is difficult to build cellars, ground floors of all buildings should be made bomb proof. The town should be completely rebuilt, with wide streets and the present narrow ones, which are quite impractical in war, should be abolished. Two broad streets running north and south and three or four streets east and west would meet requirements. There would be no institutions for old people, lunatics, etc. All should be transferred elsewhere…

These words make clear what the Governor thought about Gibraltar and the relationship between the population and the garrison. Once again, it was argued that ‘the Fortress comes first’. Perhaps he was not wrong in his assessment, and it is easy to say with the benefit of hindsight that Gibraltar was never under a serious threat during the Second World War. But the distress that the evacuation of the civilian population caused is another side of Gibraltar’s history; it is the event that for a large part of the population overshadows the rest of Gibraltar’s history and experience in the war.

Even before the war broke out, the British government had decided that the civilian population would be evacuated from the Rock if the possibility of a military attack on the fortress existed. In order to keep the civilians away from military action, create room for more military personnel and reduce the number of mouths to feed the evacuation was put into action by the British government in June 1940. Only those civilians with essential jobs were allowed to stay. About 13,500 evacuees were shipped to Casablanca in French Morocco. However, after the Fall of France in June 1940, the pro-German French Vichy government was keen to have the evacuees removed from territory under its control. The opportunity to solve this issue arose when 15 British cargo ships arrived at Casablana to repatriate French military personnel who had been evacuated from Dunkirk. Once the French had disembarked the ships the Gibraltarians boarded and were taken back to the Rock. When they arrived at Gibraltar, the Governor, Sir Clive Liddell, did not allow them to land, because he feared that it would be impossible to evacuate them a second time and that he would not be able to concentrate on Gibraltar’s primary role: that of a military garrison controlling the entry to the Mediterranean. Only when he received clear orders from London did the governor let the Gibraltarians disembark and return to their homes. This re-evacuation back to the Rock was completed by 13 July 1940. However, this did not solve the genuine problem of what to do with the population in times of war and the decision was taken to evacuate the civilian population again, this time to the United Kingdom, Jamaica and Madeira. This happened between July and October 1940. In 1943 the strategic situation had changed and Gibraltar was no longer facing the threat of an invasion. As a consequence, a Resettlement Board was established in November 1943 and in April 1944 the first group of Gibraltarian civilians arrived back on the Rock. However, repatriation moved slowly and as late as 1947, there were still 2,000 Gibraltarians in Northern Irish camps. The last of the evacuees did not return to their homes until 1951.

A glimpse of the damage and destruction that could have been inflicted on Gibraltar was seen when some heavier raids were carried out by the enemy in the autumn of 1940. Tuesday 24 September started quietly in Gibraltar, with a visit by a reconnaissance aircraft in the early morning. At 1230 hrs a single aircraft dropped bombs on the Rock. The sirens did not sound until directly afterwards. Visibility was very bad with a low easterly cloud hanging over the Rock. Shortly after this first contact, around 60 other aircraft closed in. Given the poor visibility, the anti-aircraft defences fired mainly prearranged barrages. The GDF section at Signal Hill took part in three of the barrages. The raid lasted until 1400 hrs.

About 30 bombs fell on land, mostly in the dockyard area and south of it, and a considerable number in the waters of the harbour and the Bay. Damage was caused to the naval stores building, Dutch Shell Store, South Generating Station, the barrack block at Europa, Cormorant Wharf, King George V Hospital and St Jagos Barracks. Six were killed: three civilians and three military personnel, and 17 were known to have been injured at the time of the report.

A further reminiscence from Lito Rodrigues shows the camaraderie and free-spirited banter that continued even during a potentially lethal raid:

The worst raids were carried out by the French Air Force… From our vantage point at Signal Hill everything was very clear. John Coelho, operating the height finder, used to stand there shouting that that bomb was this colour or that colour … and I remember Willie Thomson shouting back … shut up with the colours and give me the height and bearing.

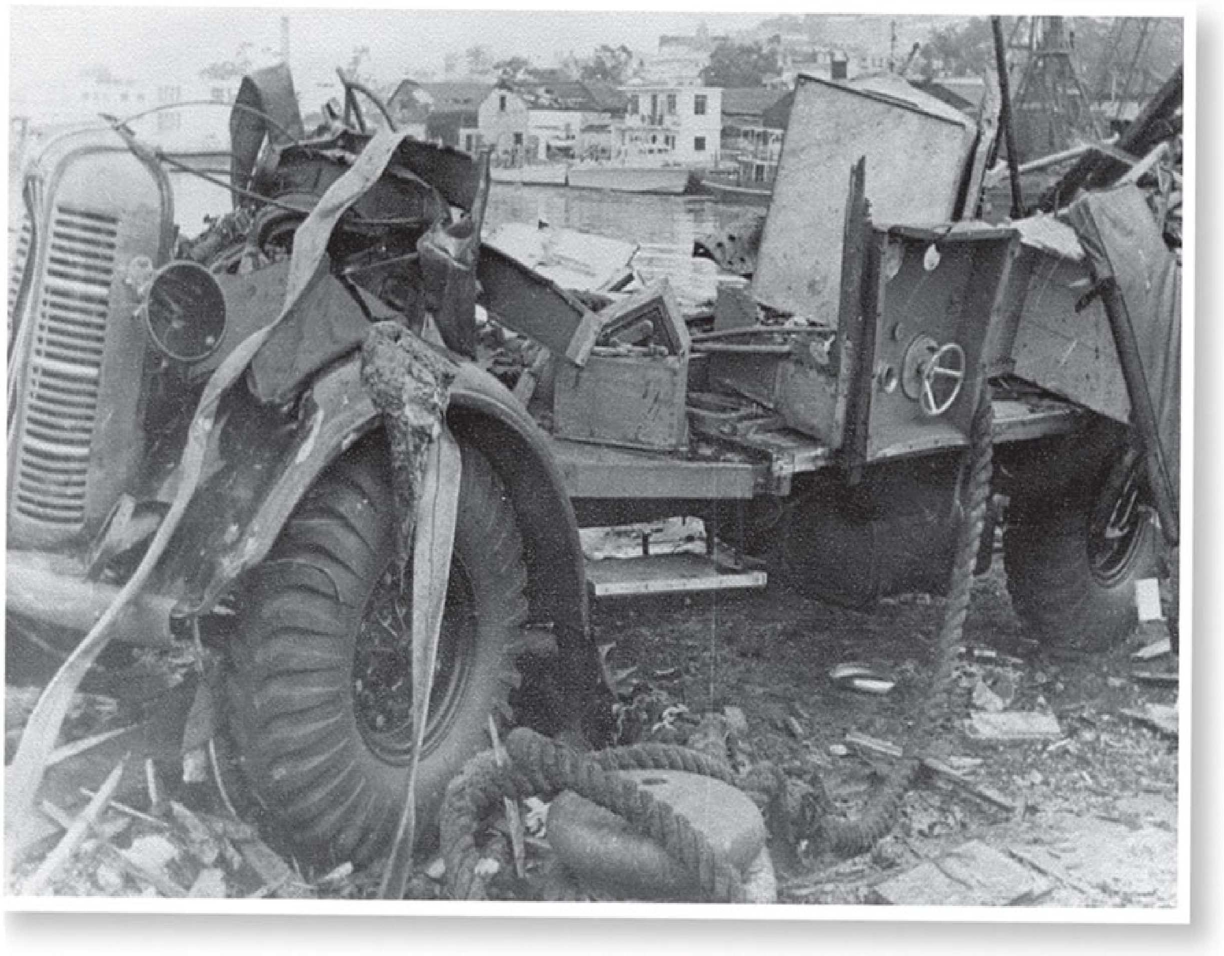
A further heavy raid took place the following day, this time in good visibility. The raid started at 1420 hrs and went on until 1630 hrs. On this occasion the sirens sounded 15 minutes before the first bombs fell. The formations of four or five planes attacked from out of the sun. The GDF diary records that nearly every time a formation came in, a single aircraft would follow and even when the formation had been broken up the single aircraft would come in. The 33 formations came in at an average height of 18,000 feet, and about 500 bombs were dropped. Almost at the end of the raid a single aircraft dived in, making it a target for the Lewis guns. Signal Hill fired 103 rounds. Over this period seven enemy planes were claimed as having been brought down. J. J. Porral, Commanding Officer of the Regiment from 1969 to 1972, had recently joined the section as a gunner and recalled some impressions from the raid:

On the second day there was good visibility and they seemed much more determined, they achieved more damage. We fired a great deal … probably for about three hours. I was on the gun that day as an ammunition number… That was my first experience under fire… There was a great satisfaction when it was all over … a great thirst … I was parched; I think part of it was the cordite getting into your throat. It was also a hot day; the throat felt leathery, dry. We all wanted water, most of us went for what must have been an old water tank in Signal Hill, it must have been filthy water!

There was a lapse in air raids after the rather busy days of September; the next hostile aircraft to come close to Gibraltar was not sighted until 10 October. There were very low clouds and it was a reconnaissance aircraft coming in under the clouds to observe.

Later on, in October, Mr W. J. Thomson wrote to the Governor including a cheque for £200 for division among the anti-aircraft fire command as a token of appreciation for their efforts during the raids on 24 and 25 September.

The effects of bombing in the harbour area during the Second World War



ROUTINE AND LIFE ON THE ROCK

As 1940 came to a close the situation, in terms of air raids, began to calm down and it is interesting at this point to look into what life was like in the garrison.

Daily life on the Rock revolved round duties and time off. Essentially those on duty lived in the gun positions, so their first priorities when on leave were washing and eating. Some of the men still had family on the Rock, so when they had time off they would meet in one of the houses which were used as meeting points, or, to use a military term, a ‘mess’. Here they could spend their free time, play cards, eat together and generally keep themselves entertained. Many houses at this time had in any case been requisitioned by the services.

J. J. Porral remembers his wartime experience as a gunner and his account provides a good insight into what life was like for the men of the Gibraltar Defence Force:

Life was very good in the GDF. The basis was that you spent two days on the gun-site and one day off in town. Because we were all Gibraltarian there was no need to come back to the unit. The camaraderie at battery and section level was excellent. The only minus point was that we glean[ed] a great deal of information from Spain as to how things were developing; we could see [how] the Germans were going about things. The emphasis at the time was to build up the defences in Gibraltar for what seemed like an inevitable German land attack. So more and more we waited for this attack to come. Of course, with hindsight, we know it never happened, but we were not privy to that at the time.

On your days off there was not a lot to do. Priority when you were off was a bath! Usually this was followed by a good meal. We used to mess with others, sometimes civilians who were still in Gibraltar. The main attraction after that was the cinema. That was the only ready entertainment you could have. The cinemas in town were the Naval Cinema, the Rialto, and the Theatre Royal. We sometimes tried to get to two shows, at 4pm and then again at 6pm. Curfew was at 2300 hrs. The other way to pass the time was to go for a drink with other members of the battery. We had a singular privilege as other ranks. Usually only officers were allowed into Spain once a month for six hours, but for us, as Gibraltarian, this rule also applied. We used to make the best of those six hours. Gradually the danger of attack receded and the North African landings came along. The local preparations for the landings were an experience.

A series of entries from the GDF anti-aircraft section war diary give a good idea of how wartime life was developing on the Rock:

July 12th 1941

At 1245 hrs a sound target was picked up on a bearing of 320 degrees. Searchlights were exposed, but target was not illuminated. Bombs were observed to explode in La Linea. HAA [Heavy Anti-Aircraft] sites did not open fire as barrage was not ordered.

HE the Governor General the Viscount Gort VC etc; accompanied by some visitors (members of the American Army) visited Signal Hill.

July 14th

Unidentified aircraft attempted to raid the Rock at 0315 hrs. It approached on a bearing of 269 degrees then changed course to north. As the searchlights could not pick it up a pre-arranged barrage was put up. Plane is believed to have released bombs in the sea near the ‘Hotel Principe Alfonso’ and made off straight away. Signal Hill fired eleven rounds.

July 15th

At 0005 hrs Gibraltar was again visited by unidentified aircraft. Aircraft came in on a steady course, on a heading of 022 degrees. A predicted barrage was put up. It is thought that aircraft made off without releasing bombs.

July 19th

At 0200 hrs town alarm sounded. Turned out to be a false alarm and All Clear was sounded soon afterwards.

Aug 13th

The Napier Dance Band and Cpl Marshall (conjurer) entertained this Section from 1930 to 2100 hrs.

Sept 15th

Lieutenant W Thomson GDF Commander of the GDF AA Section promoted to the local rank of Captain.

Sept 20th

At about 0740 hrs explosions were heard from HAA coming from the harbour area, and the Bay. A small cargo vessel sunk in the Bay, whilst a bigger one, anchored in the Bay, and a tanker moored alongside Detached Mole, were seen to have a slight list. It is believed the explosions were caused by one-man torpedo units operated by Italians.

Sept 26th

A detachment of eighteen men under Capt Thomson GDF, took part in a HAA practice shoot at a towed target, which took place from White Rock AA.

Oct 14th

HRH the Duke of Gloucester arrives at Gibraltar.

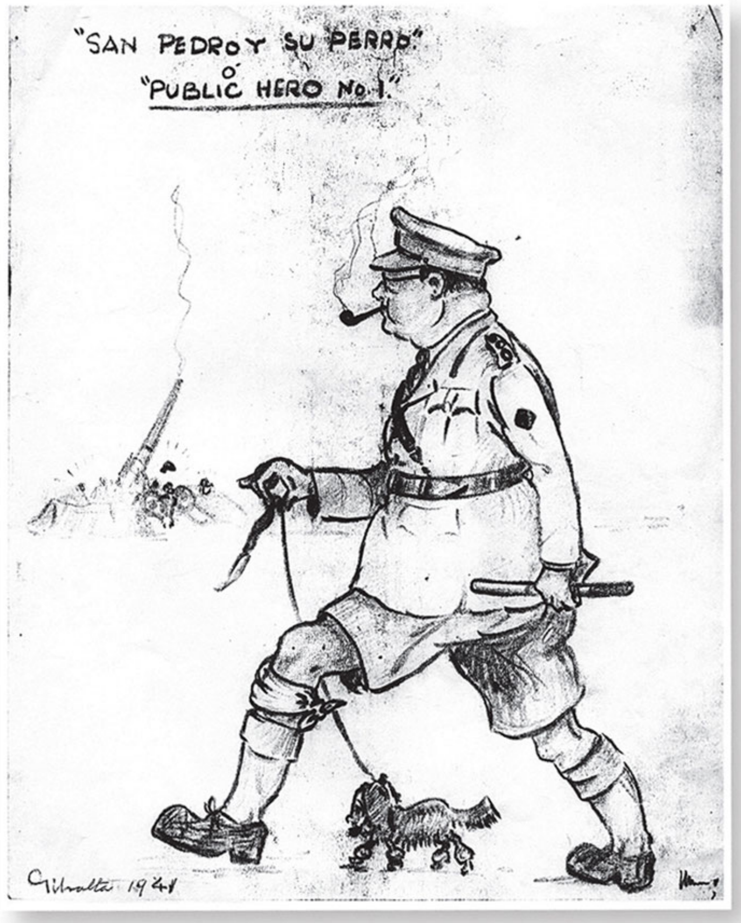
Nov 18th

Garrison Entertainment Concert Party presented a show in the Canteen SHAA called 'Jungle Juice' It lasted 1½ hours and everyone enjoyed every minute of it.

Dec 3rd

Three Other Ranks took part in the Ceremony of the Keys performed by 82nd HAA Regt RA. The parade was taken by HE the Governor. The Band of 2nd Bn the Somerset and Cornwall Light Infantry took part. This is the first time the GDF has participated in the Ceremony of the Keys.

Another aspect of life in Gibraltar at this time was entertainment provided by the Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA). When General Mason MacFarlane arrived in May 1942, on his appointment as Governor and Commander-in-Chief, it became apparent that he had very good contact with ENSA. In no time at all the likes of Michael Wilding, Beatrice Lilley, Sir John Geilgud, Elizabeth Welch and Vivian Leigh were entertaining the troops in Gibraltar at the Theatre Royal. During their stay they would be accommodated at the Convent, the Governor’s official residence.



San Pedro y su perro, a sketch of Captain Thomson, 1941.

A less entertaining aspect of life for the garrison was shortages of food, particularly of fruit and vegetables. In the aftermath of the civil war, supplies from Spain were few. Most supplies were in tins, and gun positions were supplied with reserve rations in case they were ever cut off. They were also advised when they would have to eat a particular batch in order to keep in date. The most popular – or, at least the most readily available – was Maconochie’s beef stew, and the ubiquitous corned beef.

An uneasy peace had settled over the Rock and the routine continued, parallel to further preparations to counter the threat of invasion, and that of further bombardment designed to render the Naval Base ineffective.

THE SMALLER SECTIONS OF THE GDF

THE ROYAL ARTILLERY SECTION

Running parallel with the progress of the anti-aircraft gunners, other volunteers were taken on to strengthen the coast batteries. On 3 September 1939, the day that Britain declared war on Germany, the first of these men were seconded to the 6-inch gun batteries at Tovey and Genista, for daily training in the evenings. The men were distributed between the 4 Battery Coast Artillery Royal Artillery, and 27 Coast (Lloyds Company) Royal Artillery from 3rd Coast Regiment. Those with 4 Coast Battery, to whom we will return later, were employed on a part-time basis. Those with 27 Coast were embodied and quartered at Poca Roca Barracks near Tovey Battery.

Lieutenant Wilde from 27 Coast Battery took over the training, assisted by non-commissioned officers from the same unit, and by March 1940 the section was considered to be ‘battle worthy’. The timing was opportune, as by May that year the situation in France was critical and the defences in Gibraltar were being tightened. The section proved itself in training throughout 1940 and was put on full strength. In a report on the GDF sent from the Governor to the Secretary of State for the Colonies it was stated that... ‘The GDF, with their own layers, have distinguished themselves. To date, during the war, they have attained the fastest rate of fire of any of the batteries on the Rock.’

Apart from their training, the section worked on repairing and maintaining the Rock’s defences, ‘mucking out’ in the tunnels, and building an extension of the North Front airport. In November 1940 the first GDF non-commissioned officers were promoted from within the section, two bombardiers and four lance-bombardiers.

The 24 men attached to 4 Coast Battery worked and trained on a part-time basis, training during evenings and weekends and continuing with their civilian occupations during the day.

By February 1940, 4 Coast Battery men passed out on gun drills after training on the upper batteries and Levant. Records from the time show a high standard of efficiency and discipline. In May there was a sudden influx of volunteers which was probably due to the Fall of France. These extra men trained on their gun drill at West Battery and were billeted at Europa where they also carried out marching and rifle drill. By June all GDF personnel attached to 4 Coast Battery came together to man West Battery. The roll showed a strength of 42 men. They continued to man West Battery as a unit until May 1941 when they were re-deployed to Levant and Buffadero Batteries with 23 men remaining at West Battery.

THE MOTOR TRANSPORT SECTION

As essential as the sections manning the coastal and anti-aircraft guns, the motor transport section came into being on 1 June 1940 with a maximum strength as per establishment of 58 men, a number that was rarely acheived. Their headquarters was in Rosia Road, in what used to be known as ‘El Patio Rey’. Most of these personnel had previously carried out similar duties as civilians within the transport section and had no difficulty adjusting. The GDF motor transport section ‘C Sect 33(L) Coy RASC’ was commanded by Second Lieutenant S. J. Canilla. C Section was divided into three sub-sections. No 5 sub-section consisted of two non-commissioned officers and six drivers who looked after six cars. The two non-commissioned officers were also courier drivers. No 6 sub-section consisted of five non-commissioned officers and 20 drivers, who, between them, drove 13 lorries and a Humber utility vehicle. They were also in charge of the company quartermaster stores and the Governor’s three cars held at Government House. One man was employed as cook and two others as Mess orderlies. One was attached to the War Department Fleet and another to the Artificer Company workshop. Two others had courier responsibilities.

No 7 sub-section (Military Hospital) was composed of one non-commissioned officer and 19 men, driving four cars, three vans and 11 ambulances. Their services were in great demand and Governor Liddell's report on the defences Gibraltar noted that 'The men are hard-working and reliable and they have had to put in long hours of work until reinforcements arrived from the United Kingdom.' Before this happened, drivers from the 1st Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers were also attached to the sub-section to ease the load.

Between all these sections a myriad of transport duties were carried out. They included transporting ammunition, supplying the needs of different units, providing an ambulance and courier service and moving the rubble from newly excavated tunnels, most of which, over a long period, went towards the construction of the airfield. The runway was finished in September 1942 and it immediately became a vital asset in support of the North African campaign. The motor section could feel proud of the crucial part they played in this.

It is possible that those engaged in courier duties had the most interesting time. They continually drove the king's courier to the British embassies in Madrid and Lisbon, and were also involved in transporting food and clothing to British and Allied nationals who were interned in the Spanish concentration camp in Miranda del Duero. Another unusual task was to drive the radio engineer to different areas of Spain to test the reception of Radio Gibraltar. Driver Joseph Debono remembered that on his trips to Madrid his car displayed diplomatic corps plates and flew the Union Jack. Joseph also remembered separate occasions on the Rock when he escorted an open car carrying Winston Churchill and an actor acting as Montgomery's double in an attempt to deceive the Germans about the location for the Allied invasion of Europe in 1944.

THE FIRE SECTION

In 1938, the new fire station had been completed near Victoria Battery. The small staff of 24 firemen was commanded by a sergeant. They came under military jurisdiction and were overseen by the garrison Adjutant. The cost of this force was borne by the city council including the upkeep of all equipment.

On the commencement of hostilities the city council augmented this force with the formation of the Auxiliary Fire Service. In early 1940 the decision was taken to militarize these men as part of the GDF fire section. In July, 110 other ranks were attested and embodied into the section. Most of these men were engaged in essential civilian work, and therefore could not be embodied on full-time service. They were required to report to various sub-stations around town whenever an air-raid warning sounded. Because of their civilian commitments they were called out for training on the same basis as Territorial soldiers. Mr C. Danino, who was the commandant of the original Auxiliary Fire Service was granted a commission in the fire section of the Gibraltar Defence Force and continued in command.

The GDF fire section was heavily involved with fighting fires caused by the air raids of 24 and 25 September 1940. Several crews had to deal with a fire raging at Kings Yard Lane on the first day of the raids and two crews were involved on the second day at Buena Vista Barracks magazine.

In the summer of 1941 Second Lieutenant Danino left the section and joined the Royal Air Force; he was replaced by the company quartermaster sergeant W. H. Hoare GDF who was commissioned, assuming command of the GDF fire section.

THE SIGNAL SECTION

The GDF signal section was two officers and 60 other ranks strong. On similar terms to the motor transport section, most of these men had been employed with the Royal Corps of Signals, so they carried on doing the same or similar work, but in uniform. At first they slept in barracks but soon they were accorded the privilege of sleeping at home, drawing ration allowance at the lower rate.

The GDF signal section was finally absorbed into the Royal Corps of Signals, and during 1940 – after a number of extra other ranks were embodied – the military took over Gibraltar's civilian radio distribution and automatic telephone service. The civilian staff, which had run both departments previously, now did so again as part of the GDF. The men went into the running of the radio distribution network with such enthusiasm that they even boasted an orchestra under the direction of an officer of the GDF. Radio Gibraltar broadcast two Spanish bulletins which were locally produced by the GDF section and beamed to Spain and North Africa, under the auspices of the British Ministry of Information.

A wartime view of the Princess Royal Battery armed with a 40mm Bofors anti-aircraft gun, taken from the top of the Rock of Gibraltar. The men in the picture are from an active army unit; the Special Constabulary would have supported a unit such as this. Spain can be seen in the background. (Imperial War Museum, GM90)

SPECIAL CONSTABULARY

The Special Constabulary was formed at the time of the Spanish Civil War to assist with the demands posed by the refugees arriving from Spain. Being bilingual they did sterling work with the refugees and the evacuation of civilians to North Africa. Later, as part of the GDF, they also guarded magazines and other key points within the garrison.

Initially, these men were civilians who assisted the police and were administered by them. When on duty, they wore a special armband, carried a warrant card and were equipped with truncheons. Eventually they were dressed in blue like the police but with a cap, instead of a helmet. At the outbreak of the war, they became part of the auxiliary fire service within the GDF fire section and also manned the light anti-aircraft section. At that time the men wore overalls with the GDF badge emblazoned on the side of their hats. They were employed part-time and did not live in barracks, so their drills were carried out at Orange Bastion on a fortnightly basis.

During the war years they were still considered civilians but every so often they would drill on the 40mm Bofors. If they had been needed it is likely that they would have been deployed to man the light anti-aircraft guns or act as battle casualty replacements. Within their establishment the Special Constabulary had their own officers and non-commissioned officers. The best way to describe this force is as an emergency reserve. Sir Joshua Hassan, later Chief Minister, was a member of the Special Constabulary.

THE FORMATION OF THE GDF BATTERY

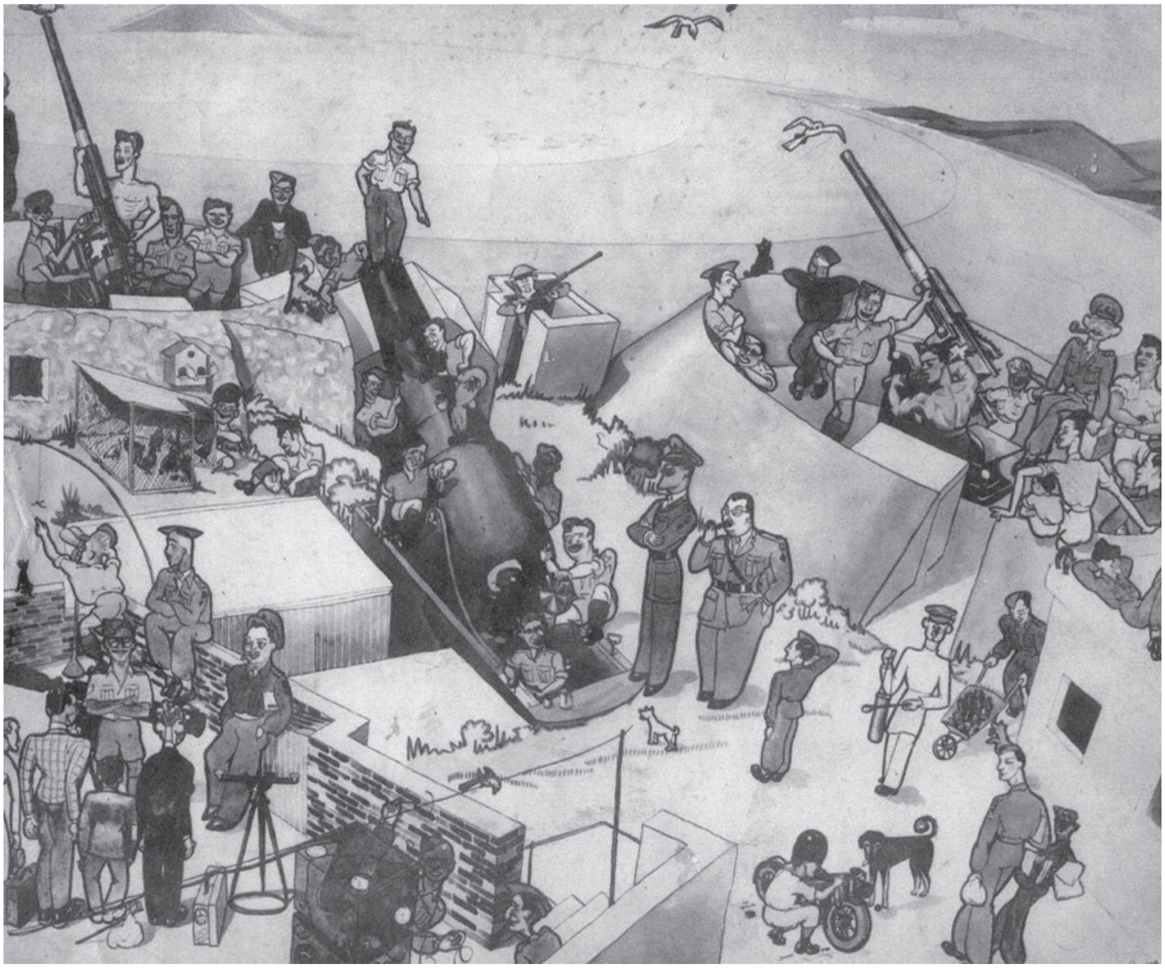
In July 1941, there was some dissatisfaction among the men about their low rates of pay – a problem which would become almost a recurring theme in the Regiment's history – and the command made representations to the Governor. The Governor, General Sir Viscount Gort, agreed with the men's sentiments and took action on it. He telegraphed the Secretary of State for the Colonies making the case that the men were all volunteers, but they were being paid at a rate lower in all respects to British volunteers and conscripts. He considered that, in war and even more as their families had been evacuated, it seemed inequitable that the men of the GDF should receive different rates of pay to other British troops, alongside whom they were serving. He added that however powerful the arguments might be for differences in rates of pay in peacetime, he thought that it was unfortunate to appear to discriminate against members of a colony who were prepared to voluntarily help in its defence in time of war. He finished the telegram with:

Had they gone home to enlist in England they would not have been subject to these discriminations, and yet Britain would have had the obligation to provide from home, the personnel to man the weapons now manned by the Gibraltar Defence Force.

The answer to the Governor came in early September. The War Office assured him that the department was anxious to give recognition to the wartime service of the men of the GDF and, as a special wartime concession, they were prepared to issue war pay to other ranks at the full British rate of 6d a day instead of 4d, but they could go no further. The War Office felt that the fact that families had been evacuated could not change the guiding principle.

In late November 1941 the Governor felt that improvements could be made in the organization of the Gibraltar Defence Force. He felt that the anti-aircraft section was the ‘corps d’elite’ of the GDF and the other sections fell below their standard. The main reason for this was not considered to be the fault of the men, but mainly because the remaining sections, except the Auxiliary Fire Service, were not in any sense self-contained or centrally administered. They were detached and employed alongside and as part of other British units, and employed in any capacity required – a scenario which made it difficult for the men to feel part of a unit.

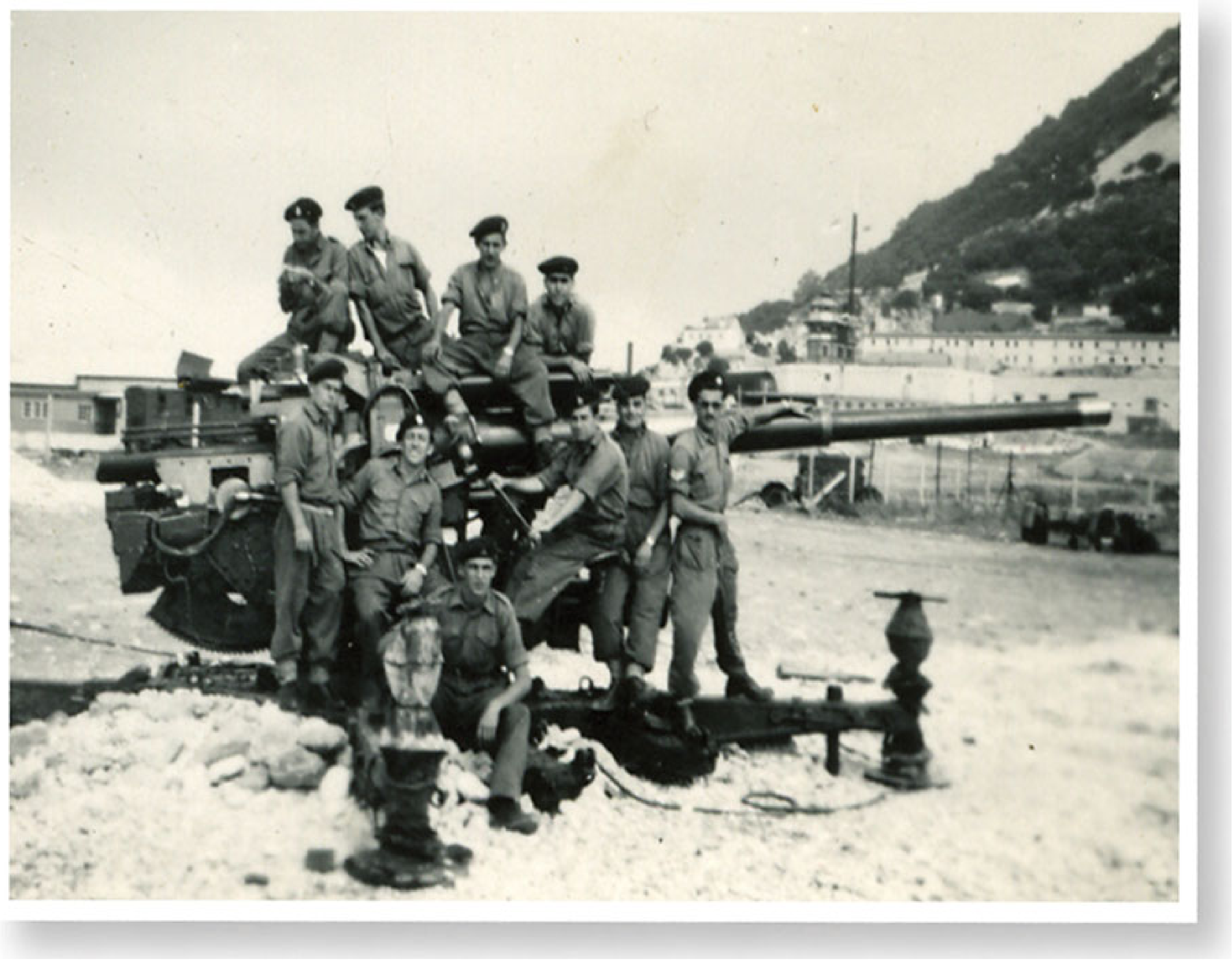
The Governor’s reasoning was that, if a real unit spirit was to be fostered in the force as a whole, it should be built round the anti-aircraft section, which he considered an efficient unit. Therefore it was proposed that the anti-aircraft section be increased to an eight-gun battery. The Governor had consulted the Royal Artillery commander who agreed that he could release the locally enlisted men of the coast defence artillery section, replacing them with Royal Artillery personnel who in turn would be rendered surplus if the GDF anti-aircraft battery was created. To implement these changes the coast defence artillery section was to be deleted from the war establishment of the Gibraltar Defence Force, together with the medical section, and the men so released would be transferred to the anti-aircraft battery.



Second World War cartoon depicting the GDF. Major Willie Thomson is in the middle smoking a pipe.

Quick Fire 3.7-inch anti-aircraft gun

The Quick Fire (QF) 3.7-inch anti-aircraft gun was Britain's primary heavy anti-aircraft gun during the Second World War. It was roughly the equivalent of the German 88 mm Flak and American 90 mm, but with a slightly larger calibre of 94 mm. It was used throughout the war in all theatres except the Eastern Front. The gun was produced in six major variants, two versions (mobile and fixed) and in considerable numbers. The last version that was introduced in 1944 stayed in service until the late 1950s, when guns were being replaced by guided missiles. The version used in Gibraltar during the war had an effective range of approximately 7,500 metres and could fire up to 20 rounds per minute.



A 3.7-inch anti-aircraft gun at Napier of Magdala Battery, Gibraltar. Note the increase in size from the 3-inch 20 cwt anti-aircraft gun used by the GDF up to 1942. (Photograph courtesy of Jim Linwood)

3-inch 20 cwt anti-aircraft gun.

The signals and motor transport sections were to remain, as these were composed of men who had continued to carry out their normal peacetime trade after embodiment. The Auxiliary Fire Service section was also to continue as it fulfilled a role which was not otherwise provided for. The final proposed change was that, in place of the infantry section, on whose strength the two GDF staff officers were borne, the GDF should have its own headquarters establishment, consisting of the officer commanding with the rank of major, a staff captain and four other ranks.

On 5 May 1942 Captain W. Thomson attended a conference in connection with the formation of a GDF battery. About two weeks later Brigadier D. C.

Learmont, Royal Artillery, addressed all ranks of the GDF and formalized the situation by announcing the formation of the GDF heavy anti-aircraft battery. It was to form part of 82nd Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment. Things began to move quickly after this and a series of promotions were announced.

Captain W. Thomson, who was to command the new battery, was promoted to major while Lieutenant C. Norton was promoted to captain and appointed Battery Captain. Second Lieutenant G. A. Prescott was promoted to the war substantive rank of lieutenant. Towards the end of the month Sergeants Gareze and Gordon were granted emergency war commissions.

On 1 June 1942, the GDF Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery finally became operational. It ceased to be attached to 256 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery Royal Artillery and became responsible for its own administration. At this stage they gave up their 3-inch QF 20 cwt guns and were re-equipped with four 3.7-inch guns and a ‘Maggie’ radar. Major Willie Thomson was appointed Battery Commander, and he took over a force of over 150 officers and men. As part of these changes the medical section was disbanded and the personnel posted to the remaining sections of the new battery. Some members of the motor transport section also joined the battery as drivers.

In the early hours of 29 June, the air-raid warning red was given and four predicted barrages were ordered and fired. Shortly afterwards an aircraft was seen in the beams of the searchlights, and the GDF battery was the first to engage on visual target drills. The target was later seen to be losing height when it changed its course to the east and was lost to the battery behind the Rock. The aircraft was identified as a Piaggio 108 four-engine bomber which was later reported as probably having been brought down off the east side of the Rock. During the engagement the gun-site personnel were heavily handicapped by the smoke screen that was created around the harbour area to protect the dockyard. During one of the barrages No 3 gun had a misfire. All the correct drills were carried out but the round became jammed and later developed a separated case. Ten minutes after reporting ‘No 3 gun misfire’ and after dealing with the separated case, the gun was back in action.

Slight bomb damage was caused to the North Mole, and a number of bombs fell in the sea near the boom defence. In the north-west corner of the dispersal area of the airport, a Hudson was burnt out while a Fulmer and a Swordfish sustained slight damage. There were some casualties, among them an officer and three RAF other ranks, a United States Air Force officer and three other ranks at a Bofors site and four other ranks at a light machine-gun post, all within the area of the Royal Air Force camp. A week later, on 6 August, intelligence reports were received confirming that following the raid on the 29th one enemy aircraft had crash landed and was badly damaged, another had made a forced landing with five wounded on board and a third had also been damaged.

THE WAR MOVES AWAY FROM GIBRALTAR

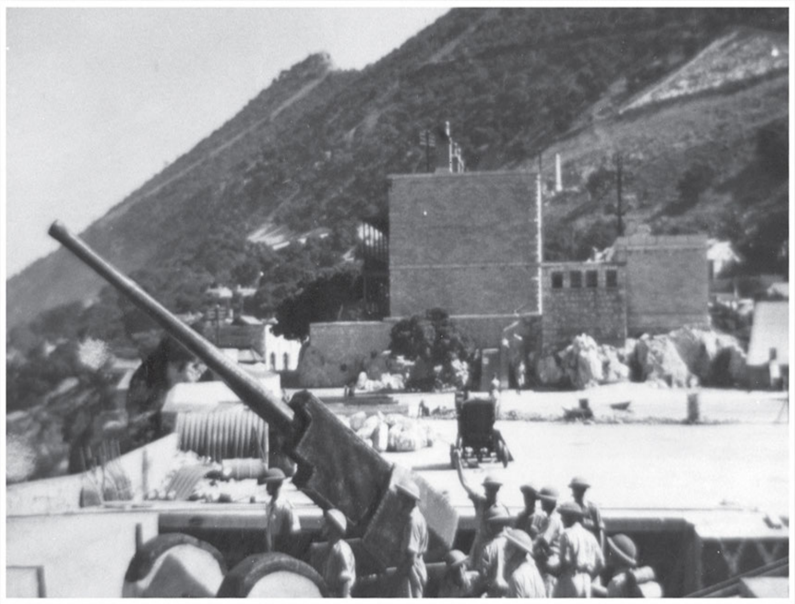
At this stage of the war the number of air raids on the Rock began to decrease and the GDF battery and the other units on the Rock were able to adopt a more stable routine. Training and maintenance of equipment continued at a pace, but there were more opportunities for inter-unit sports and other leisure activities to relieve the monotony of duties and manning of gun-sites.

At 2040 hrs on 22 October 1942, air-raid red was issued again. During the raid the majority of the bombs dropped into the sea, however, five fell in the area of Guardacorte in Spain, while some incendiary bombs fell in the area of San Roque.

Reconnaissance flights over the Rock continued as did the engagements by the anti-aircraft batteries. On two consecutive days, a single German Junkers 88 flew over the Rock and was engaged. On the second day, after an initial engagement by the anti-aircraft batteries the code word ‘Bullseye’ was given, signalling the need to clear the sky for Gibraltar fighters to intercept. It was reported later by one of the pursuing pilots that smoke was escaping from both sides of the Junkers, which was also reported to be flying very low.

Between enemy activities, the routine on the ground continued. Leave was granted occasionally and seven-day leave periods in Tangiers were popular. Church parades were grand affairs with the troops marching to their place of worship led by regimental bands. Full feature films in the canteens were also well attended. Victor Bashery, a well-known and popular local entertainer, provided concerts whenever possible, and Governor’s Cottage Rest Camp provided welcome respite on a rota system.

In May 1943, 175th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment and 375, 386 and 441 Batteries arrived on station to relieve 82 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, of which the GDF battery was part. As the year progressed, with Italy out of the war and the Germans in retreat, the threat of air attack on Gibraltar diminished and major defence reductions started to take place.



Dummy anti-aircraft guns at Buena Vista Barracks during the war.

By September 1943 members of the GDF could be afforded longer leave periods. On these occasions it was sometimes possible to visit Madeira where many evacuated family members were living. Others took advantage of the Colonial Government Scheme, which enabled groups of soldiers to visit the UK.

Eventually, following the general decrease in war activities in the area of Gibraltar, a gradual, but steady trend commenced that initiated the process of disembodiment of members of the GDF under the Defence Force Ordinance (1943). The bulk of the disembodiments commenced at the end of November.

Just after the disembodiments started, an advance party of a new unit arrived to take over Napier Battery. Shortly after, command post personnel from the same battery arrived to man the whole of the Napier command post. At this time two guns, No 3 and 4, were still being manned by GDF personnel, and in terms of strength, there were still 53 men living at Napier with the remainder on seven days' leave, waiting for disembodiment.

As from 4 December 1943 the rate of disembodiment increased, with ten men on average leaving every day. The guard for Napier ceased to be provided by men from the GDF on 6 December when the unit handed over to 596 Battery. At the same time that the GDF battery was working towards handing over its responsibilities, members of the signal and motor transport sections were also being individually disembodied.

Meanwhile, a new future for the GDF was about to emerge. Since August 1940 there had been discussion of the options for the force after the war ended: the main option under consideration was that of a conscripted force, but the alternative of a voluntary unit was also looked at, and was to come up again as preparations for the conscripted force developed.

The Gibraltar Defence Force had been established under the Defence Force Ordinance 1939, which provided for the formation of a voluntary force. The ordinance provided that a number of important matters would be prescribed by regulation; for example, the period of service for which the men would be enlisted and the amount and nature of the training they would undergo. It provided that the maximum engagement would be four years but that a man could be re-engaged for other shorter periods, each one not exceeding four years. In a report prepared in 1945 by the Attorney General at the request of the Governor, it appeared that no such regulations had ever been passed. It was assumed, however, that these details had been taken care of through occasional administrative arrangements.

The ordinance also provided that, in the event of an emergency, the force could be embodied by proclamation. This had happened on 2 September 1939 and its members were, therefore, engaged in full-time military service from that date.

This proclamation was superseded by the Defence Force Ordinance enacted on 3 November 1943, which created a force designated the 'Defence Force 1943', which provided that all the members of the 1939 force were to become members of the 1943 force and that new members were required to be enlisted. The force was deemed to be an 'embodied' force and all members old and new would be required to serve their time, until the Governor proclaimed that the force be disembodied. The 1943 ordinance did not describe or refer to the force as a 'voluntary force'. The original volunteers who were still part of the force on 3 November 1943 were compulsorily made members and were bound to give full-time service until disembodied. Further to this, the 1943 ordinance made it lawful for the controller of manpower, a military officer at the time, to direct:

… That any man of the 1943 Force who should be disembodied was to undertake such civilian employment as the Controller might require until the Governor disembodied the Force by proclamation or until the man was re-embodied

The employer of any man who had been disembodied was obliged to permit him to attend any required military training and was forbidden to make any deductions from his pay for the time spent at training. The training consisted of 50 hours of drills every year.

In 1944 it was decided to make use of the compulsory powers of the Military Service Ordinance and on 31 May the public was informed that ‘All young men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two who are physically fit and not engaged in essential war work shall be called up for six months’ military training as anti-aircraft gunners’. The communiqué went on to say that ‘though embodied in the Gibraltar Defence Force they will undergo their initial training with the Royal Artillery and on its completion will be liable to 50 hours per annum and embodiment with the Gibraltar Defence Force in an emergency.’

In 1944, following the continual disembodiments, all that was left of the original GDF battery was two officers and six other ranks. The group had been allowed to continue and it was planned that they should form part of a training establishment which was to be set up to train the new conscripted men.

The aim at the time was to eventually fill the establishment of officers, warrant officers and non-commissioned officers with Gibraltarians. Exceptions would have to be made in cases where it was considered that a lack of experience or training within the GDF prescribed that regular army personnel should fill the vacancies. Following the decision to introduce conscription, the organization of the Training Establishment was announced:

Gibraltar Defence Force Training Establishment

Officer commanding and chief instructor	Captain C. A. Norton GDF
Adjutant	Lieutenant R. Beggs RA
1 heavy anti-aircraft subaltern	Lieutenant Mitchell RA
1 GDF subaltern	Lieutenant R. S. Peliza GDF
1 battery sergeant major	From 175th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment RA
1 battery quartermaster sergeant	From 175th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment RA
1 battery quartermaster sergeant	Sergeant Fabre JL GDF
1 sergeant clerk	Sergeant Serfaty M GDF
Non-commissioned officer instructors	175th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment RA
Other staff	Orderlies etc. Embodied GDF personnel with any shortages made up from

CONSCRIPTION

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Following the announcement of conscription, arrangements were quickly made by the officer commanding the GDF training battery. All the necessary GDF personnel and attachments were brought together to complete the training team and the training battery became an additional battery of 175th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment RA and was established at West Battery. On 31 May the GDF war diary carried an entry recording the start of conscription:

It has been decided to introduce compulsory military service in the Gibraltar Defence Force for all male Gibraltarians. The first step will be the call up, for six months initial training, of personnel between, eighteen and twenty-two years of age.

All first intake personnel will be called for;

HAA duties

Medical duties – for conscientious objectors.

The first intake of approximately one hundred men will report for training on or shortly after the 15th June 1944.

The men were not actually called up for the 1st intake until 17 July 1944: 99 men were called up and they reported to West Battery at 14.00 hrs.

The intakes went through their training successfully. At times things were a little crowded; in order to get through the backlog the intakes had to overlap: the 2nd intake was embodied on 18 September at West Battery while the 1st intake moved on to South Battery. On 15 November the 1st intake moved to Napier Battery for site training while the 2nd intake took over South Battery, and on that same day 100 men comprising the 3rd intake reported to West Battery to start their training. The GDF training battery was being tested to the limit.

These first few intakes consisted of a considerable number of men over the age of 18, because men were now returning to Gibraltar having been evacuated several years earlier. In these early days, positive results were being achieved, as shown by the following details:

1st intake	
Corps training	No of recruits trained
3.7-inch guns static	53

Predictor AA No 1	24
Range finder No 3 and plotters	12
Telephone/Orlikon	10
Shooting Heavy Anti-Aircraft. Fired 101 rounds. One sleeve target shot down.	

2nd intake	
Corps training	No of recruits trained
3.7-inch guns static	52
Predictor AA No 2	23
Range finder No 3 plotters	12
Telephone/Orlikon	11
Shooting HAA. Fired 225 rounds. Three sleeves shot down.	

During their live shoot the 3rd intake fired 71 rounds at a towed target and one sleeve was shot down. As the training continued with these and other intakes, a base of trained soldiers was being built up and discussions were soon focused on the way forward. Thought was again being given to establishing a voluntary force, but the idea was quickly opposed by the controller of manpower, among others. It was felt that the potential efficiency of the unit had been enhanced by the enthusiasm and 'esprit de corps' of the men, and returning to a system of voluntary enlistment would eliminate these gains.

The Deputy Fortress Commander was also inclined to see conscription as the answer. He felt that if it was considered necessary to maintain a local defence force in the colony, it could be achieved only on the basis of conscription. He thought that, eventually, it might be possible to introduce some form of regular engagement as in the case of the Royal Malta Artillery, but this would only be possible if the GDF was to provide an attractive career.

In December 1944, a proposal was put forward for the formation of a GDF reserve. The matter was discussed on 28 December by the executive council, and later again on 11 January 1945. These meetings failed to approve a reserve as suggested, but suitable amending regulations under the Defence Force Ordinance were passed to enforce 14 days' additional training each year for all personnel who had completed the original six months' compulsory training.

The situation at the time was that a number of men would be called up every year to carry out their six months' primary training, while those who had previously completed this training would do 50 drills plus 14 days' continuous training in the year. Apart from this, there was no active GDF and it was fully appreciated that, if and when an emergency arose, it would be impossible to use the GDF men who had completed their training unless some suitable organization existed into which the men, when embodied, could be incorporated. Over and above this, in order to be able to organize these commitments, a larger permanent cadre would be required. This cadre could be formed from regular troops from other units, but this would have the disadvantage of denying GDF personnel the chance of extending their training and providing potential candidates for employment as officers and non-commissioned officers.

As it was unlikely that any larger cadre would be embodied in the immediate future, the GDF permanent staff and attached personnel settled into the routine of training the intakes. After the overlapping that had taken place with the first three intakes in 1944 the pace slowed down and 1945 and 1946 saw just two intakes per year. During these early days of conscripted service the permanent staff was undermanned and did not have all the trained senior and junior non-commissioned officers it required to carry out the complete syllabus of training. There were attachments from 175th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment and on occasions from other units, but this did not always work as it should. The 6th intake in 1946 was one of the first to suffer. During basic training they were divided into four sections instead of the usual five due to a lack of section commanders for their basic training, and it became necessary to second extra instructors from infantry battalions on station. However, the same instructors were not always available, due to commitments within the battalions, and the constant changes had an effect on training. Despite this the final results from the 6th intake were considered promising. After an initial heavy anti-aircraft shoot which was not up to standard, three other shoots gave good results. Three sleeves were brought down with consistent hits visible on others.

Major Norton, front row, second from right, with the winning team from the garrison sports competition, 1952.

In May 1946 a number of men were selected to represent the Gibraltar Defence Force in the Victory Parade in London, which was planned for 8 June. They started their training shortly after, and a week later, were inspected by the Governor Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Ralph Eastwood at the Convent. The following day they embarked at 0000 hrs for the United Kingdom. The contingent consisted of Major R. M. Sheppard-Capurro; Captain C. A. Norton, GDF; Sergeant F. Azzopardi, GDF/HAA; Sergeant M. S. Serfaty, GDF/HAA; Sergeant J. J. Ferro, Signal Section; Bombardier A. Carreras, GDF/HAA; Lance-Bombardier E. Yeo, GDF/HAA; Lance Corporal L. V. Abrines, Signals Section; Lance Corporal A. Durk, Motor Transport Section; Gunner J. Borg, GDF/HAA; Gunner M. J. Durante, GDF/HAA; Gunner F. Fortunato, GDF/HAA; Gunner F. Franco, GDF/HAA; and Gunner F. H. Sheppard-Capurro, GDF/HAA.

Captain Norton remembered every single man looking forward to the parade and how proud they were of the opportunity afforded to them. They were accommodated under canvas in Kensington Gardens, right opposite the Albert Hall. All the Commonwealth contingents invited to take part in the Victory Parade were very well looked after during their four-week stay in London. They were provided with free access to all the places of interest and every contingent, according to their strength, was supplied with free tickets for the best shows in the West End. The parade itself was described as a never-to-be-forgotten experience. Thousands of citizens lined the route of the march through the City of London, where King George VI took the salute. At the end of June the contingent returned to Gibraltar aboard MV Britannic.

As the Victory Parade was being held in London, Gibraltar held its own parade on 8 June. The parade was composed of officers and men from all the units stationed in the garrison at the time: Lieutenant R. J. Peliza GDF and Lieutenant J. L. Fabre BEM GDF with 60 other ranks from the currently serving 6th intake and 40 men from 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th intakes. They assembled at the Naval Grounds and then formed up by units, marching north along Queensway towards Casemates Square. On arrival at the square the parade re-formed and prepared for their march up Main Street. A mass of people waved, cheered and clapped, showing exuberant support of the troops along the whole route leading up to the Convent and beyond. The Governor took the salute at the Convent as the parade continued on to Ragged Staff where they dispersed.

As 1946 progressed the 6th intake was disembodied on completion of their training and the 7th intake was embodied in early November. The 7th intake was also to suffer shortages of instructors, but this situation was contained and acceptable results were attained even if they caused considerable headaches for the training staff. In December steps were taken to alleviate the problems that the intakes had been facing. Over time, the situation improved and future intakes fared much better.

Passing-out parade, 1947

The GDF diary covering the reception of the 7th intake must have been written by someone who enjoyed the task; it gives a good idea of the atmosphere and general impressions of what happened during the early days of an intake:

They jumped out of the lorries each with a suitcase, their names, (which are generally a headache for the instructors for the first few days), painted on the outside. They look a cheerful young crowd and more or less of average height and weight.

The rumour that our barber, a disembodied conscript from the first intake, Mr Vargas, gives drastic haircuts, using his scissors without mercy to locks, waves, or curls must have gone round for they all appear to have taken the precaution of having a haircut before coming up, preferring the town barber’s delicate touch to our army’s tough masculinity. Of course some of them are already being ordered to have another one.

Somehow this lot, on arrival, differently to some other intakes, seem to have taken their calling-up as an unavoidable event in their life offering no visible grudge and meeting this enforced duty with a sense of humour.

The GDF was now well and truly involved with the training of conscripted soldiers and was generally achieving good results.

THE 1950s

By the end of September 1949 the 10th intake training came to an end and was followed by three camps for GDF reservists, which were embodied between early October and the end of November. On 1 April of the following year the GDF Training Establishment moved from West Battery to Buena Vista Barracks. This was to be the home for all future intakes up to and including the last one, the 40th intake, which was embodied in June 1972 and discharged in October 1972. Buena Vista provided much better facilities than West and South Battery. The Stone Block had an upper floor of barrack accommodation while the lower floor included the stores and some lecture rooms. There was a large square to the north of the Stone Block and south of it a much small square where the battery offices and the armoury were located. The first intake to train at Buena Vista Barracks was the 11th which was embodied on 23 April 1950 and consisted of 100 men. This intake had the privilege of providing the first ever Convent guard to be mounted by the Gibraltar Defence Force. The guard was made up of non-commissioned officers and men: Sergeant L. Orfila, Bombardier J. Carter, Gunner A. Canessa, Gunner A. Lindon, Gunner A. Chipolina, Gunner S. G. Ansett, Gunner H. Estella, Gunner S. Glynn, Gunner J. Borastero and Gunner J. Dellipiani.

Intake training still took the same general form. The men were embodied for six months. They would carry out basic training during the first eight weeks. At the end of these first two months they would compete in an inter-section competition which consisted of seven capabilities on which they had trained. These comprised miniature range results, skill at arms on the rifle and the Bren gun, physical training, turn out, marching and barrack room inspection.

Gibraltar Defence Force passing-out parade, 11th intake, 1950.

The soldiers would then go onto the next stage which was technical training, consisting of heavy anti-aircraft both static and mobile, and light anti-aircraft, which would also include Predictors and height-finder training. Towards the end of their six months' training there would be the live firing of heavy anti-aircraft guns and light anti-aircraft guns by the newly formed gun troops.

The final task was the passing-out parade. These events became a highlight of the Gibraltar calendar and typically included 40mm gun drill displays, physical training displays, foot and rifle drill, 25-pounder gun drills and firing displays. The Governor and Commander-in-Chief would attend and from November 1950, so did members of the newly formed Legislative Council. It was a great day for families and friends, who attended in their hundreds, and it was always a proud moment for all, not least the training staff, when the troops carried out the passing-out parade, with the Governor carrying out an inspection of the troops and then taking the salute at the march past.

Towards the end of 1950, following the disembodiment of the 11th intake, three reservist camps took place. On 23 November Gibraltar's first legislative council was to be inaugurated by His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh and the privilege of providing a guard of honour for the occasion fell on the second reservist camp. The date of the camp was brought forward a week to allow 100 reservists of the 110 embodied to be trained for the event.

During the early 1950s a considerable amount of effort was made by the local headquarters in Gibraltar to improve the conditions for members of the GDF. Correspondence between the Governor and the brigadier in charge of administration in Gibraltar and the War Office from this period reveals that generally a special case had to be made for any requests for improvements. To better understand this issue, which was to afflict the Gibraltar Defence Force and then the Gibraltar Regiment for many years to come, it is necessary to understand how the British Armed Forces worked at this time. Pay increases, changes of conditions or any other factor which affected the morale or effectiveness of the force were the same throughout the British Army and applied on the same terms to each individual unit. By contrast, the GDF was a colonial force. It had acquitted itself with distinction throughout the war and it had the backing and support of the local command but it was not, and could not, be subject to the same rates of pay or conditions. Some of the reasoning behind this was understandable, particularly in that they were not expected to serve outside the colony; hence the percentage reduction on British Army rates. What was more of a problem was that their pay increases, at whatever rate, did not come at the same time as increases for the rest of the army. They had to depend on intervention which meant a case having to be made by the unit which was then supported by the headquarters.

When such a case was made it had to be justified separately, and endless computations were required in order to find a solution. First, there was the percentage, which was worked out based on British Army rates; second there were the local circumstances and rates, which led to interminable computations. Third there were comparisons drawn up with the Royal Malta Artillery, which in any case was an imperial force.

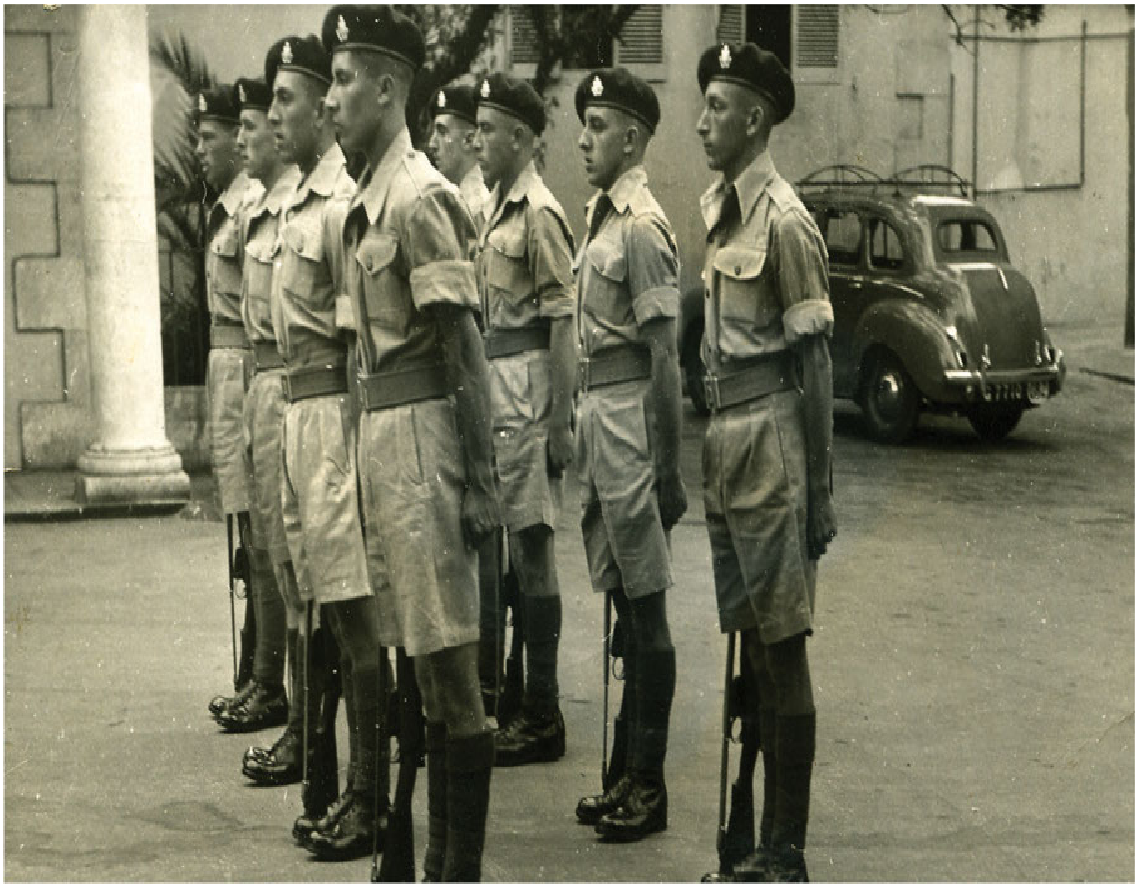
This particular exchange lasted from 1950 through to 1956. The Governor General Sir Kenneth Anderson wrote to the War Office in December 1950 expressing his concern about the future of the permanent cadre of the GDF. He had written to the War Office in March that year and had not received a reply.

The answer from the War Office came in February 1951 noting that there was a long-term requirement for the permanent training cadre of the GDF, however the requirement was limited to cadre strength only. The reply made clear that the Governor's request – that GDF officers should receive the King's Commission – was seen as a major problem. At that time it meant the GDF would become a corps of the British Army. It was thought that this would create problems, primarily because of the impossibility of providing career prospects, and suitable conditions of service, for such a limited number of officers, which would still need to be compatible with the conditions laid down by the Pay Warrant.

Implicit in the granting of a King's Commission was the opportunity for promotion to the rank of lieutenant-colonel. The only outlet to enable individual officers to achieve this would be by serving with the Royal Artillery. In order to be able to release officers to these appointments, the officer corps of the GDF would have to be considerably larger than necessary for the cadre itself. The Finance Department was then likely to insist that these additional officers would have to count against the authorized ceiling for regular Royal Artillery officers.

As far as other ranks were concerned the issue was related again to the small numbers involved, with the resultant problems of providing attractive career prospects. The suggestion was that if the GDF became a permanent force under local ordinance, the Governor would be able to offer officers and other ranks terms of service to suit his (the Governor's) requirements. Under such conditions, in the case of other ranks, it would be unnecessary for men to re-engage for 12 years or 22 years in one step. Under local ordinance it could be done by stages of 2 or 4 years at a time, with a gratuity after so many years of service. This, it was thought, would have the advantages that it might not be such an overbearing commitment, and would also enable soldiers to leave earlier than on completion of 22 years' service if they wished, and so help the flow of promotion. The War Office considered that this method would give much greater flexibility to the GDF than if the personnel were commissioned or enlisted into a corps of the British Army, and, at the same time, achieve the object of being able to offer more attractive terms than were possible at present. The financial conditions of service, pay, pensions and gratuities could be decided later, once the structure and status of the GDF had been agreed. And so it was decided that the GDF was to become a permanent force under local ordinance, and personnel were not to be enlisted into a corps of the existing British Army.

The 1951 intake



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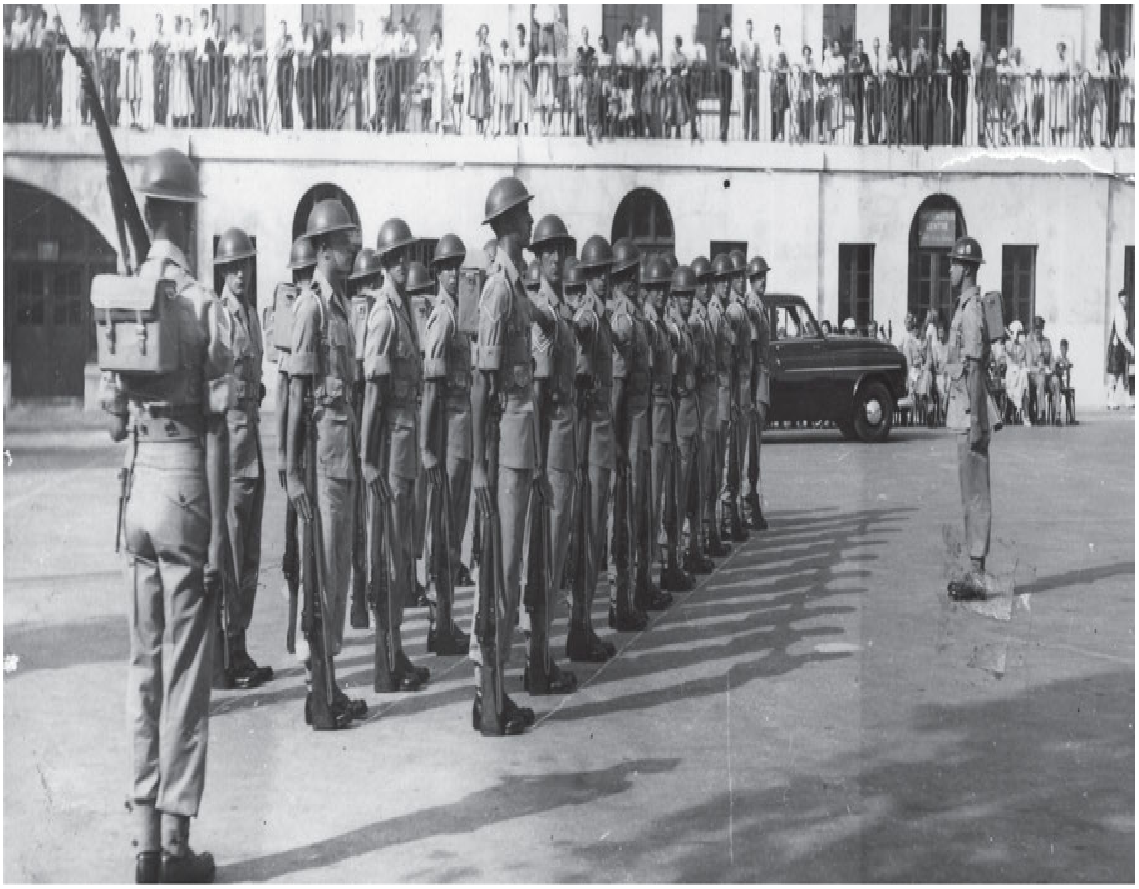


The 18th intake on parade in Grand Casemate Square in 1956.

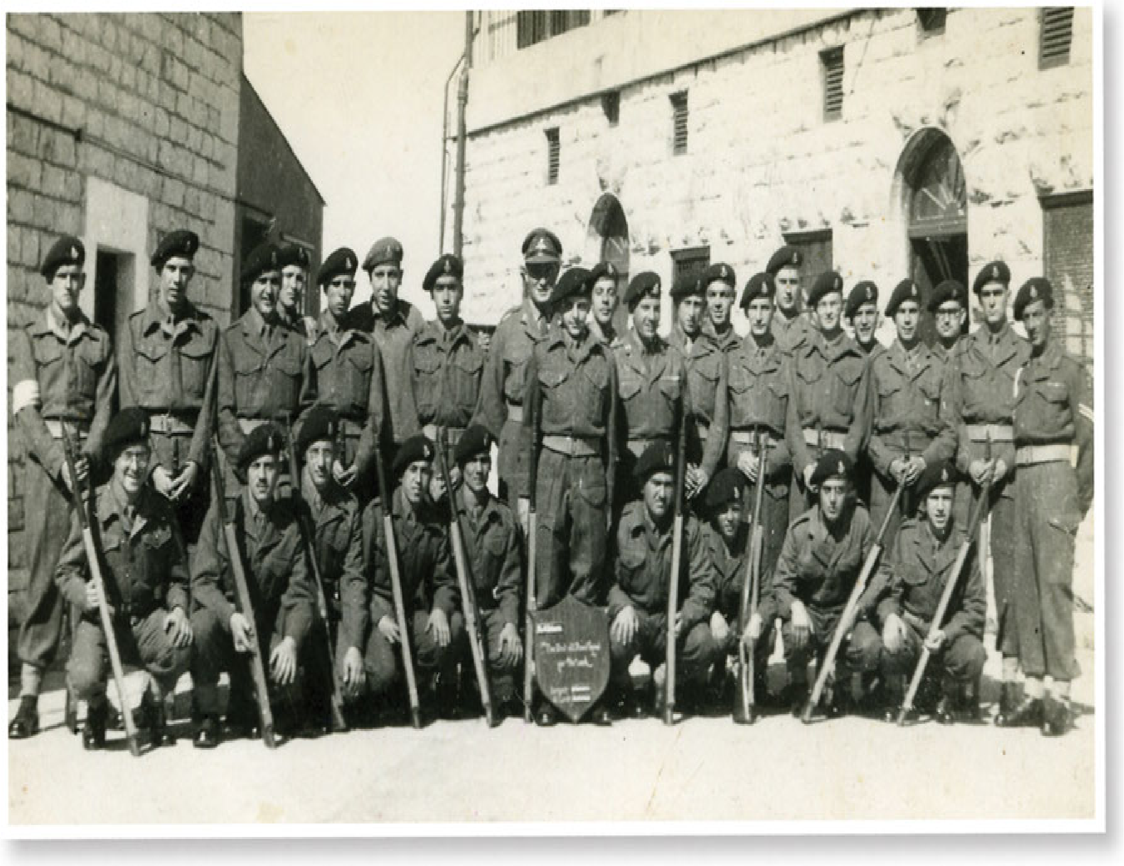
By 1952, however, new rates of pay proposed by Gibraltar to the War Office had been rejected. Eventually, a small increase was approved by the War Office in September 1953, to be backdated to 1 April of that year. The situation, however, had not improved a great deal and by early 1956 was reaching crisis point. New rates of pay were finally announced on 21 April 1956 and they were to apply retrospectively from 1 January 1956. A comparison between the rates is shown below:

Daily rates of pay (Officers)					
	Old rates	New rates (from 1 January 1956)			
Rank	Service	s	d	s	d
Second lieutenant		12	0	16	0

Lieutenant	On appointment	13	6	17	6
Lieutenant	2 years	15	0	19	0
Lieutenant	3 years	16	6	20	6
Captain	On appointment	20	6	26	6
Captain	2 years	22	0	28	0
Captain	4 years	23	6	29	6
Captain	6 years	25	0	31	0
Major	On appointment	31	0	37	0
Major	2 years	32	6	38	6
Major	4 years	34	0	40	0
Major	6 years	35	6	41	6

Daily rates of pay (Other ranks)

	Old rates	New rates			
Rank	Class	s	d	s	d
Warrant Officer Class 1	Class 1	13	6	19	0
Warrant Officer 1		12	3	17	9
Warrant Officer Class 2	Class 1	12	0	17	6
Warrant Officer Class 2		11	0	16	6
Staff Sergeant	Class 1	11	6	16	6
Staff Sergeant		10	3	15	3
Sergeant	Class 1	9	9	14	3
Sergeant		9	0	13	6
Corporal	3 star	8	0	12	3
Corporal	2 star	7	3	11	6
Corporal	1 star	6	9	11	0
Lance Corporal	3 star	6	9	11	0
Lance Corporal	2 star	6	0	10	3
Lance Corporal	1 star	5	3	9	6
Gunner	3 star	6	3	10	3
Gunner	2 star	5	6	9	6
Gunner	1 star	4	9	8	6
Gunner	6 months	4	3	7	9
Gunner	Enlistment	3	9	7	0



16th intake, 1954.

The 17th intake trumpeters, 1955.

The realization that the conditions of service for the permanent cadre needed to be improved in order to achieve the retention of essential staff did not end with the pay review. General conditions of service, including pensions in particular, was the next subject up for scrutiny. The conclusions from the debates on all these factors were compiled to form the Gibraltar Defence Force Regulations.

During the period between 1950 and 1956 the permanent staff continued with their primary role of training intake personnel. During this stage they prepared eight intakes from the 11th to the 18th and a considerable number of 15-day camps. Alongside this the small staff took on other duties such as ceremonials, and the occasional extra duties such as the removal of unexploded ammunition after the explosion of the ammunition ship RFA Bedenham, and, at the same time, managing to achieve particularly good results in most sporting events against other units.

In early May 1953 some members of the staff were lucky enough to be selected to form a small contingent to represent the GDF at the Coronation Parade which took place in London on 2 June. The contingent was led by Captain R. J. Peliza and was made up of the following other ranks: Bombardier J. Pitto, permanent staff; Bombardier A. Estella, permanent staff; Gunner J. Sanchez, permanent staff; Gunner J. Romero, 15th intake; Gunner T. H. Smith, 15th intake; Lance-Bombardier G. M. Posso, GDF Reserve; and Gunner L. Wahnon, GDF Reserve.

After a few days of administration and rehearsals the contingent had three days of sightseeing, including visits to the Cavalcade of Sports at the White City Stadium, the Royal Naval College at Greenwich and the Guinness Brewery at Park Royal London. After this, the real work started when they commenced their training with 500 other men from all parts of the Commonwealth at the Royal Artillery Depot, Woolwich. The initial training consisted of drill followed by progressive route marches of up to 11 miles to prepare them for Coronation Day when they would march up to 13 miles. At the end of May they moved from Woolwich Garrison to Kensington Gardens where they lived under canvas, and on 2 June they took part in the coronation procession from Westminster Abbey to Buckingham Palace together with the other colonial contingents.

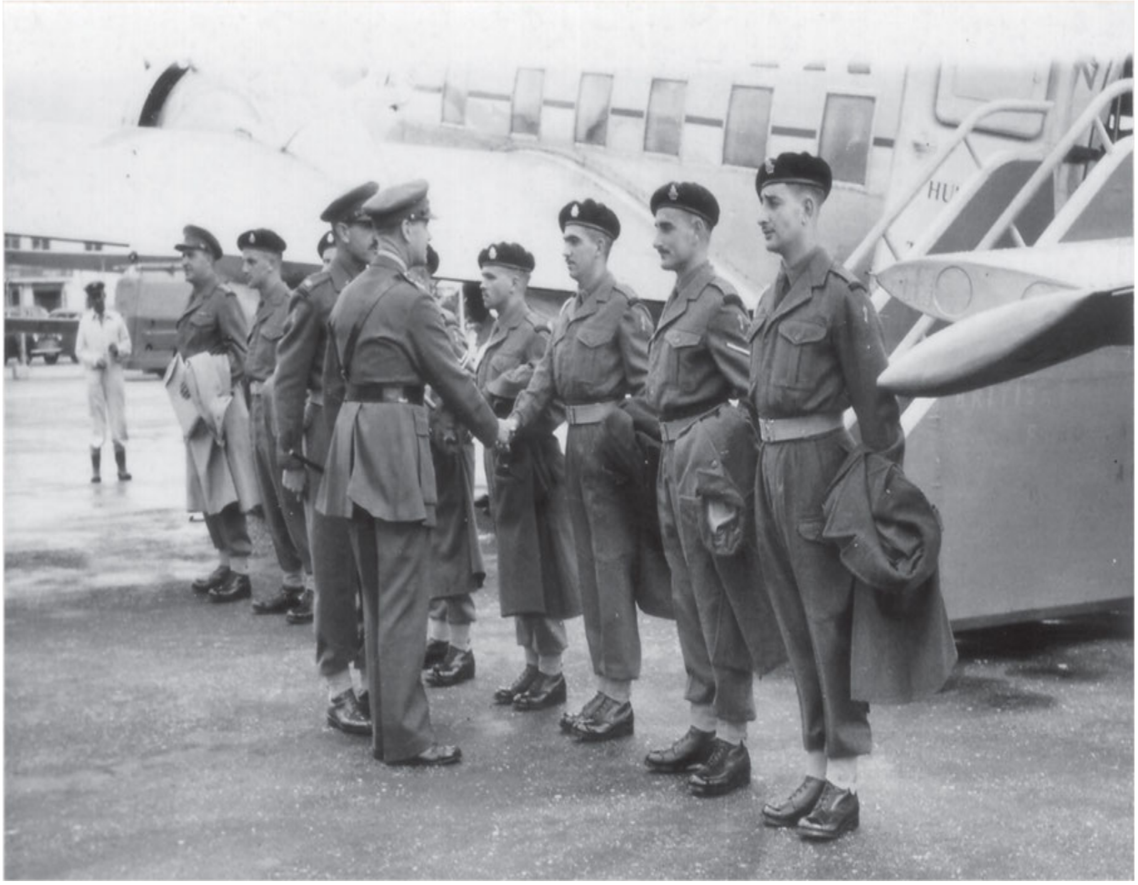
Meanwhile, in Gibraltar, three officers and 65 other ranks took part in the Coronation Parade at North Front. The Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Lieutenant-General Sir Gordon Macmillan KCB CBE DSO MC, took the salute. In the evening one GDF LAA detachment of the 15th intake, took part in the Tattoo held at the Victoria Stadium. They competed in the Alarm Stake against two light anti-aircraft detachments from 164 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery and achieved second place.

In the UK, the GDF contingent was still busy. They had to attend the coronation medal parade, to be presented with the coronation medal and later inspected by Her Majesty Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh. This was followed by a march, some days later, through the city of Birmingham and a march past the Lord Mayor of the city. The next major event was boarding HMS Eagle for the Royal Naval Review at Spithead. Towards the end of June they were at last on their way back to Gibraltar.

Interviewed by the Chronicle after their return, each man highlighted what had impressed him most. For Bombardier Pitto, it was the majestic atmosphere of London during the coronation. Bombardier Estella, the physical training instructor, felt that the contingent had stood up well to the intensive training. Bombardier Posso commented that all was not work. They had been to the Royal Tournament at

White City and many other places and shows that only London could provide. The other reservist was Gunner Wahnon and for him it was the 3D films and the premiere of Single Handed at which Princess Margaret had been present. Gunner Sanches felt that it was the Spithead Review that he would never forget, crowned in the evening by fireworks and the illuminated warships.

Coronation Parade contingent, 1953

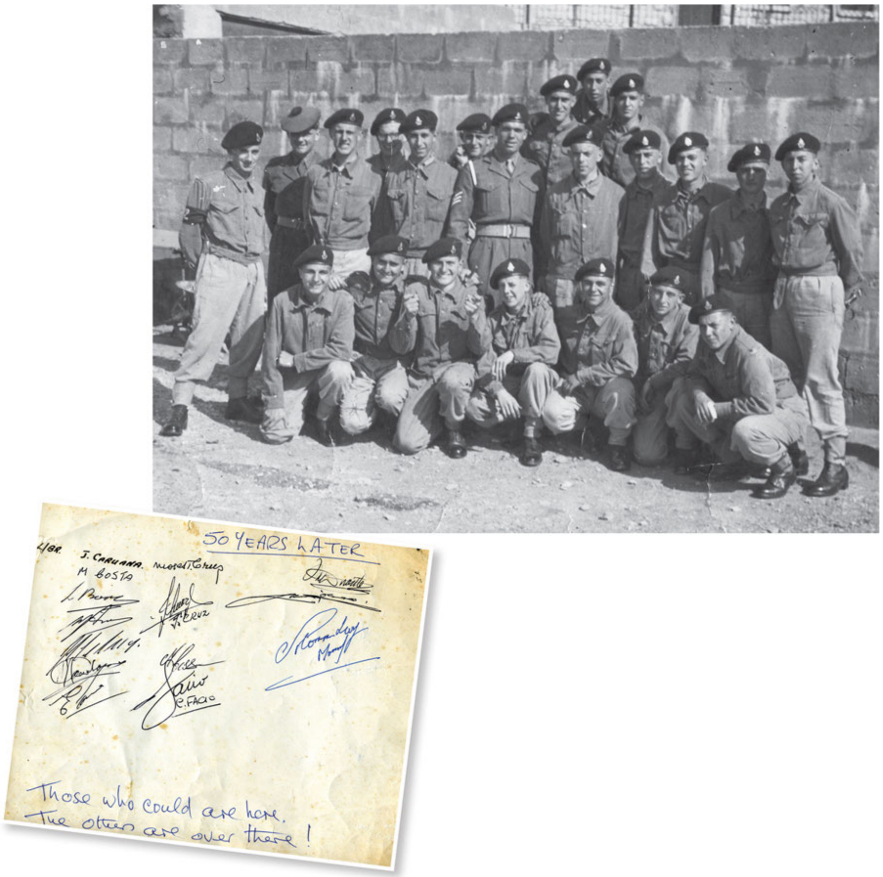


Farewell before the flight to the UK.

Drill in the UK, preparing for the parade.

Visiting HMS Victory in Portsmouth.

More drill in the UK.



50 YEARS LATER

4/BR.

J. CARUANA.

M BOSTA

V. CRUZ

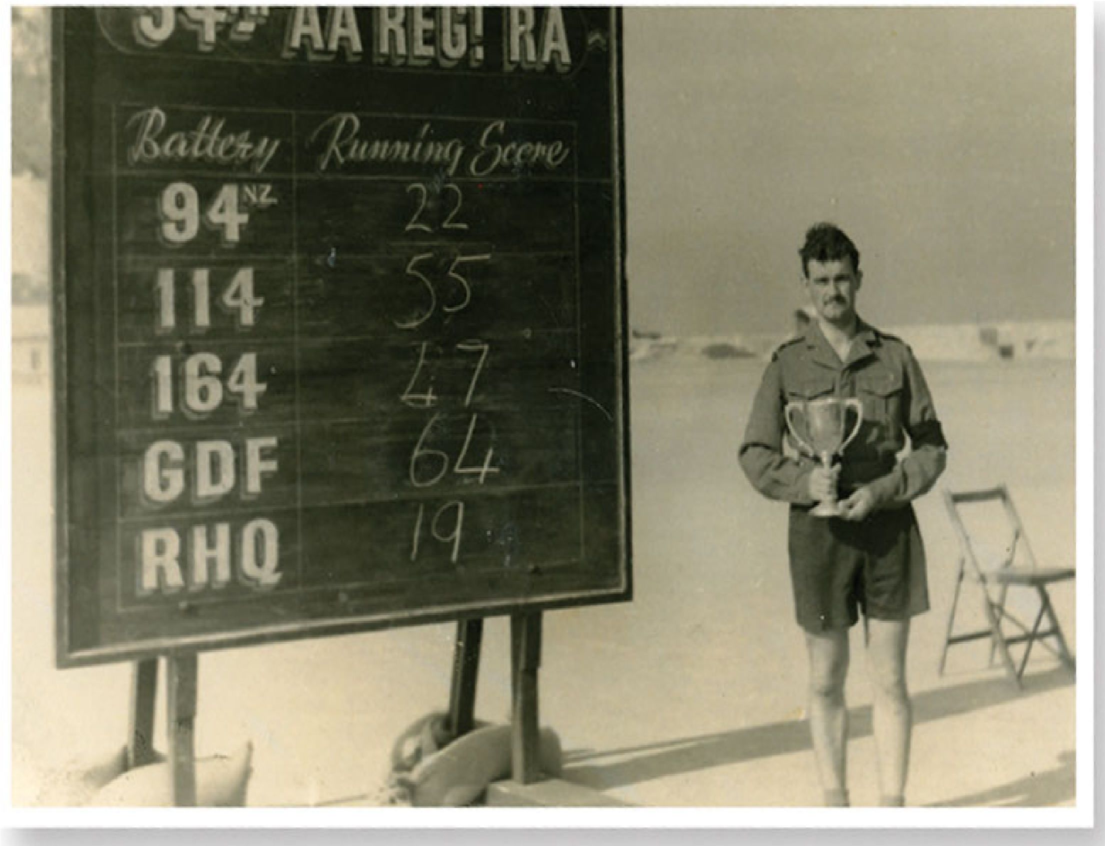
C. FACIO

Those who could are here.
The others are over there!

Members of the intake of 1955 then … and their signatures from a reunion 50 years later.

In November 1954, an interesting situation became public when the Secretary of State for the Colonies issued a statement on the liability of Gibraltarians for United Kingdom national service. It stated that any Gibraltarian who took up employment in the UK, had been resident there for more than two years, and was between the ages of 18 and 28 years, was liable for national service in the UK. Service in the Gibraltar Defence Force would not affect the person's liability; any question as to whether such service would be taken into account as reckonable full-time service for the purpose of the National Service Act, was solely for the consideration of the appropriate service authority. Those going to the UK for a course of education, with the intention of returning to Gibraltar when the programme had finished, would be regarded as temporary residents, with no liability for National Service. Should they remain in UK after the course, however, they would become liable, and the period during which they attended the educational course would be counted towards the residential qualifying period of two years.

Physical training in the 1950s


34th AA REGt RA
Battery
Running Score
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22
114
55
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47
GDF
64
RHQ
19

On 10 May 1954 the Officer Commanding, Major C. A. Norton MBE, commanded a detachment of two officers and 62 other ranks in a parade at the airport to greet Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh at the start of their visit to Gibraltar. A further 60 other ranks took part in street security and crowd control along the route. On the following day, 40 other ranks, under the command of newly promoted Major R. J. Peliza, assisted with street security and crowd control from Short Horn Farm Estate along Europa Road, Trafalgar Hill and the North Entrance to the Dockyard, as Her Majesty visited the sights in Gibraltar.

Just under a year later, on 17 April 1955, the Queen appointed Major W. Thomson Honorary Colonel of the Gibraltar Defence Force. He had been one of the founder members of the Gibraltar Defence Force in the spring of 1939, when he had been one of the first 50 volunteers. When the GDF battery was formed during the war he was appointed the first Battery Commander. After his disembodiment he continued to take a keen interest in the affairs of the GDF and in 1953 presented the unit with a silver replica of a key to the Fortress, known from then on as the Willie Thomson

Key. This key was then competed for by members of each GDF intake and later Gibraltar Regiment intakes, and it was given to the most successful recruit. The Willie Thomson Key is now awarded to the best TA recruit at the end of their training.

On 16 June that year the first issue of the GDF magazine Stand Easy appeared, costing 3d per copy. In its editorial the editor made no promises:

This magazine comes to you from out of the blue of Buena Vista Barracks. It is a barrack-room effort and is intended to give you a break from the rigidity of army parades, as the name implies. It is a new venture and we do not know when it will appear again. We refuse to build castles in the air with optimistic predictions, and have left it to readers and contributors alike to decide with the measure of their support, whether or not the paper is worth its salt. This paper, if it endures, will report and record life in the Gibraltar Defence Force. Through it, past members will recollect their good old days with it, serving members will get a preview of things to come, we therefore hope to build a spirit of comradeship that will bind together the past, present and future of the force for the benefit of all.

As nothing succeeds like success, let us all try to make this first issue a great success, by selling as many copies as possible to Reservists as well as to prospective conscripts. In this way better than any other, we can give our new venture a flying start, and ensure that we can afford to make the next appearance possible.

We end hoping that you will so much enjoy this first edition you will be looking forward to the next and subsequent issues.

The Honorary Colonel, Willie Thomson visits the GDF in 1956.

The editorial team got it absolutely right. Just under a month later the next edition was produced with a printed front and back cover. Within the same year there was an edition in October and another in December, and by then the cover had progressed to two colours. Stand Easy was to continue improving but not without effort. In the early 1970s it was still being produced using regimental equipment – typewriters and a Gestetner duplicator, which was a fairly messy procedure.

Late in 1955 the need for a reserve of officers had been realized. Until then, had the men been called up in an emergency they would have augmented the ranks of the Royal Artillery batteries, but that system would have resulted in a loss of esprit de corps and sense of belonging. It is possible that some officers from the GDF Training Establishment might have been deployed with them, but there were simply not enough to fill the posts required.

The new officers were selected from two different groups of soldiers: those who had carried out their National Service during the past 12 years and were members of the GDF Reserve, and the pool of men who were still to be called up for their six months' compulsory service. The normal retiring age would be 41 which was the age at which statutory liability for service in the GDF ended. It was also considered, however that in the early stages a certain degree of flexibility was required in order to establish a suitable age/rank structure for the future.

The officer training was carried out mainly by Major Peliza, together with Lieutenant D. Collado and F. Carreras, all under the control of Major C. Norton. They were assisted by Captain Macneish from the Royal Sussex Regiment who was later replaced by Major Carghill from the same regiment. A total of 36 officer cadets were trained in two separate camps, but were all advised of their commission on the same date, 25 October 1957, with the effective date backdated to 9 September 1957.

At this time no arrangements were available for them to attend courses in UK so their training was based on that which they carried out with their men, added to which there were a number of separate 'officers' days'. The effect of the introduction of the reserve of officers, apart from the main one of providing a command element on training camps and on deployment, was to foster the beginning once again of a feeling of belonging to a unit. There were three types of enlistments in the GDF at the time: the regular training staff, the volunteer officers and the conscripted men, but now if they were to be called up in an emergency, they would operate as a unit and not just augment the other forces in the garrison. The following GDF cadets were gazetted as second lieutenants effective 9 September 1957:

Lewis Stagnetto

John Joseph Porral

Paul Albert Garbarino

Lewis William Triay

Augustus Victor Stagnetto

Joseph Alfred Canessa

Octavius George Requena

Joseph Louis Pitaluga

Arthur Lionel Lavarello

Mario Leopold Sanguinetti

Lionel Joseph Codali

Felix Ernest Pizzarello

Charles Alfred Munford

Charles Montegriffo

Joseph Louis Olivero

Charles Cavilla

Edwin Yeats

Alfred Joseph Vasquez

Robert Wilson Coelho

Arthur John Ferrary

Peter Joseph Isola

Charles Germain Gaggero

Reginald Henry Norton

Alfred Derek Canessa

Malcolm Derek McGrail

Anthony Mena

Edgar John Lavarello

Francis Facio Beanland

Joseph Louis Romero

Leslie Albert Wahnon

Louis Andlaw

William Louis Chamberland

Louis Gonzalez

Stanley Gordon Prescott

Joseph Ernest Francis

Louis Joseph Vasquez

Joseph-Marie Emil Gareze JP, who had held a commission in the GDF previously and then in the Royal Artillery, was promoted to captain on the same date, after being 'technically' embodied as cadet.

Following the formation of the reserve of officers, a reserve of senior and junior non-commissioned officers was formed. The initial list was:

A COMPANY

Sergeant F. Dellipiani

Corporal E. Podesta

Lance Corporal G. De Veras

Lance Corporal E. Hermida

Lance Corporal J. Moreno

Lance Corporal J. Pitaluga

Lance Corporal J. Santiago

Lance Corporal J. Scagnilia

B COMPANY

Sergeant G. Passano

Corporal S. Perez

Corporal C. Pizarro

Lance Corporal A. Balban

Lance Corporal A. Brooks

Lance Corporal E. Castle

Lance Corporal J. Davis

Lance Corporal E. Ellul

Lance Corporal D. Gabay

Lance Corporal M. Grech

Lance Corporal W. Lavagnia

Lance Corporal C. Tribello

C COMPANY

Lance Corporal L. R. Bosio

Lance Corporal J. Catania

Corporal C. Hayward

Corporal P. Hernadez

Corporal H. Masseti

Corporal M. Parody

Corporal A. Ramagge

Corporal T. H. Smith

Corporal V. Wahnon

D COMPANY

Sergeant A. Casciaro

Corporal A. Montegriffo

Corporal C. Manito

Lance Corporal N. Alvarez

Lance Corporal A. Dellipiani

Lance Corporal A. Hassan

Lance Corporal J. Olivero

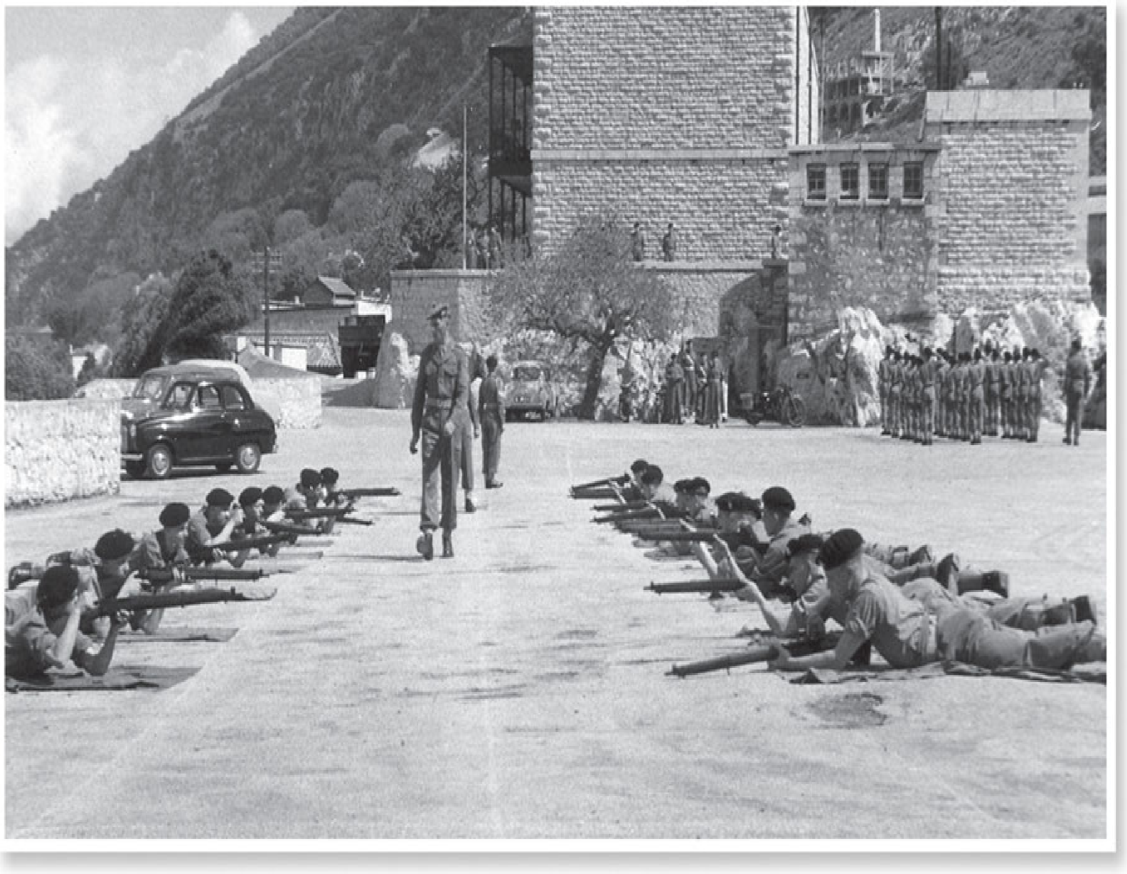
Lance Corporal J. Pratts

Lance Corporal D. Rowbottom

Lance Corporal F. Silva

Lance Corporal A. Wall

Small-arms training in the 1950s



In 1956, following a decision to make maximum use of LEPs (Locally Employed Personnel) to form anti-aircraft units, the Governor General Sir Robert Redman was asked by the War Office to study the extent to which it might be possible to expand the Gibraltar Defence Force. The point was made early on in the proceedings that this was a purely exploratory exercise and that the War Office was in no way committed to an increase even if this was to prove practical. This was probably linked to the impending planned deployment of the 54th Anti-Aircraft Regiment from Gibraltar to Middle East Land Forces, an organization set up in 1946 and which existed until 1967.

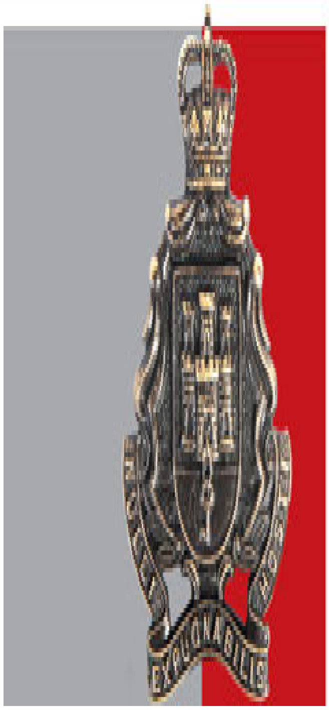
At the time, an air threat to Gibraltar was seen as almost negligible in a limited war context. In a total war the possibility for such an attack was higher, but it was clear that Gibraltar was not seen as a number one target for hostile enemy action. As a consequence, the anti-aircraft capabilities in Gibraltar were destined to be given a lower priority; this decision was followed by the beautifully termed conclusion that the air defence of the Rock would in the future suffer from ‘a consequential lack of financial enthusiasm’. Also, in the current strategic situation there would be no reinforcement from the UK of either manpower or equipment for anti-aircraft defences.

The overall assessment of the threat that Gibraltar was facing was also obvious in the policy on the use and role of coast artillery equipment. The Defence Committee had agreed that the coastal guns in Gibraltar would be left in situ on political grounds and to allay local anxiety. However, the only cast artillery and associated equipment that would be retained in 'care and preservation' was the upper battery consisting of three 9.2-inch guns and a six 6-pounder close defence battery. All the remaining guns would be abandoned for operational use and merely maintained – that is kept painted – as historical pieces.

Plans were drawn up to leave one battery from 54th Anti-Aircraft Regiment behind in Gibraltar if the Regiment was deployed away from the Rock, as was expected to happen, and around this battery the GDF was expected to build up a reliable air defence using locally employed personnel.

While these ideas were being developed men continued training for their artillery role. However, the overall threat assessment resulted in further and deeper changes. Very soon, the artillery role was to give way to a largely infantry establishment. The first steps in the formation of the Gibraltar Regiment as a four-company infantry battalion, albeit to be manned principally by conscripted men, had been taken and planning continued to implement these changes.

CHAPTER FOUR



THE GIBRALTAR REGIMENT: 1958–99

Lieutenant-Colonel C. Norton (second from left in the back row) and the hockey team in 1964.

THE NEW REGIMENT AND ITS DUAL INFANTRY-ARTILLERY ROLE

By 1958 the last draft of 54th Anti-Aircraft Regiment Royal Artillery, the parent unit of the Gibraltar Defence Force, was about to leave the Rock. The farewell from the unit signalled the changes the Gibraltar Defence Force was about to go through. On 22 May, 1958 the Officer Commanding, Major C. Norton, was promoted to lieutenant-colonel and was appointed Commanding Officer of the new unit to be; the Gibraltar Regiment. The actual name change however, did not become official until 30 August.

The new regiment, although essentially an infantry battalion, was to be dual-roled and would still have the responsibility of manning the 9.2-inch battery. The change was essentially a marrying of the permanent staff, the reservists and the Voluntary Reserve of officers and non-commissioned officers. There would be four companies, composed of reservists who would be derived from the National Service intakes, in the same way as the gunners would be. Following their intake training they would attend biannual camps for refresher training. The 9.2-inch battery consisted of O'Hara's, Lord Aireys's and Spur gun. They were effectively designed to command the Strait of Gibraltar, but the drills were later to be modified, enabling them to engage land targets.

The changes that had to take place were considerable in every respect, but the major one was the retraining and re-roling of the permanent staff who would be continuing to train the intakes in their infantry role. Just before the end of the year Major Peliza returned to the unit having completed a company commander's course at the School of Infantry Tactical Wing in Warminster. Days later Lieutenant F. Carreras also returned, having completed his platoon weapons course at Hythe, and he was closely followed by Sergeant R. Bedford, and Corporals R. Randall and S. Martinez who had attended a three-month senior non-commissioned officer platoon weapons course also at Hythe. Lieutenant D. Collado, who left in early

January 1959 for his platoon commander's course at the School of Infantry Tactical Wing, arrived back on 6 March. Towards the end of the year in 1959, two other non-commissioned officers, Lance Corporals Collinson and Lengui attended the platoon weapons course at Hythe and Corporal Brittain the signals course at the same location. In a very short time the Regiment had built up a base of instructors in a different field, who would be tasked to carry through the change.

The regimental guns

The three guns operational in the early 1970s were O'Hara's, Lord Aireys's and Spur and they could be fired as a battery or as individual guns. Below the two top guns – Spur gun being sited further down on a promontory on the southern slope of the Rock – was the engine room with a six-cylinder Ruston diesel engine. This engine drove a generator providing electricity, via a switchboard, to the various motors, enabling pumps to run for the three guns' hydraulic power system. The engine room was connected to O'Hara's and Lord Aireys's by two tunnels.

Under each gun, where the tunnels joined up, was a chamber providing magazines, the pump rooms and also rooms for ancillary machinery. There was also an ammunition hoist to deliver the shells and charge bags to the gun pits above.

Each gun pit was a large circular room which lay directly below the gun and where the 'ready ammunition' was stored. The shells were stored upright along a ledge all the way round the gun pit and just next to this was a rail system with a trolley on to which the shells were tipped as they were required. The gun pit was a hive of strenuous activity when the gun was firing. The 'roof' of the gun pit, was in effect, the base plate of the gun above, so, as the gun traversed, the whole structure turned with it. The four ammunition numbers (men) in the pit had the job of tipping the shells onto the trolley and then mating the loaded trolley

onto the moving hoist in order to send the shells and charge bags up to the gun.

As the shells arrived on the gun the No 3 would operate part of the hoist which would tip the shell on to the rammer ready to be loaded. By this time the breach had been opened and the No 1 would operate the rammer loading the shell into the breach. The order to engage would come, and both line and elevation layer would concentrate on laying the gun onto the moving target. There was always a special muted period at this time, broken only by the steady hum of the machinery, as the gun followed the target:

‘Elevation on!’ … ‘line on!’ … fire!

A thunderous roar followed, coupled with impressive recoil from the twenty-eight ton barrel!

Another wait for the fall of shot some seconds later; then the corrections:

‘Add 50 … left 10 … Fire!’

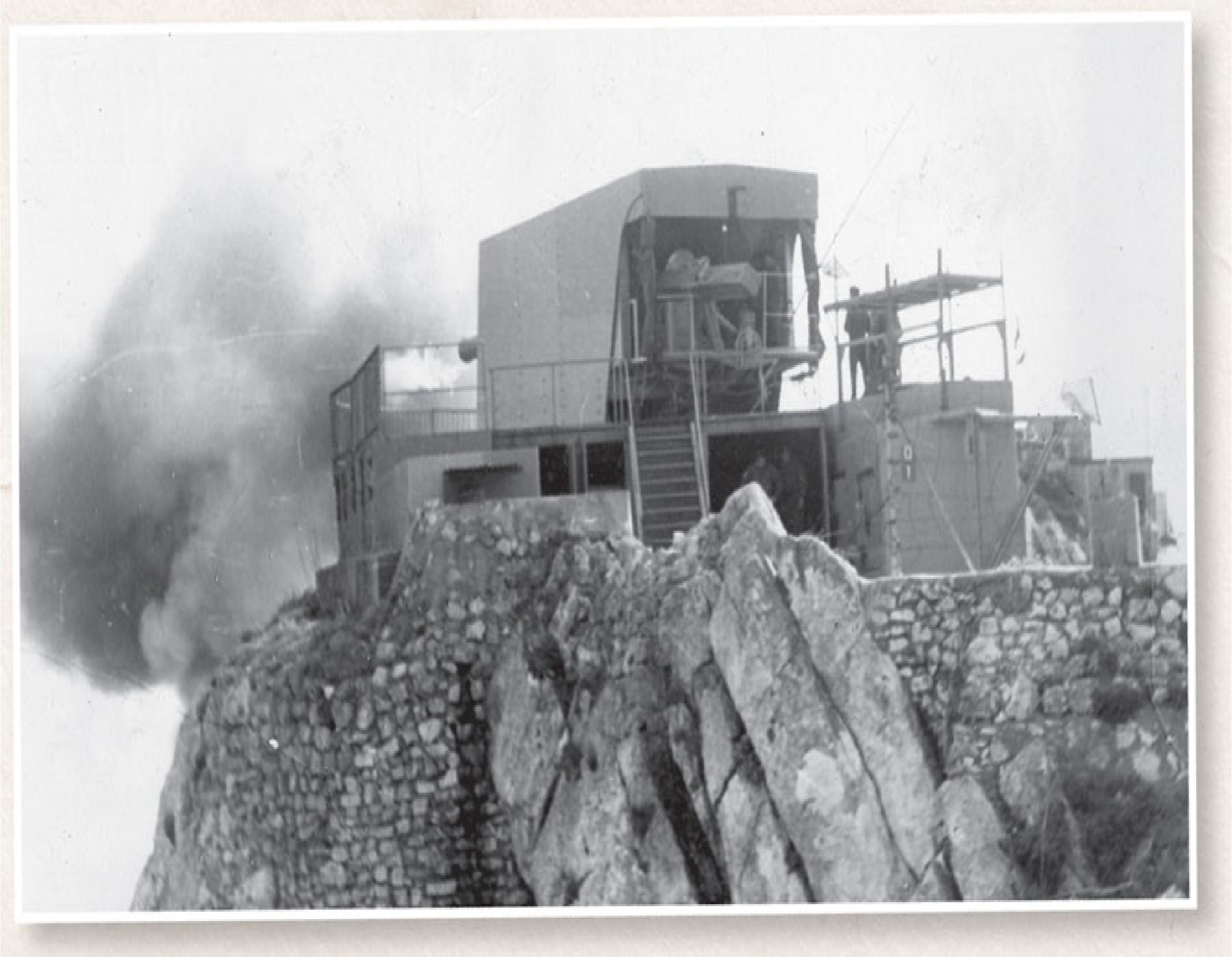
They were imposing guns to operate, given their power, accuracy and dominating location.

Each gun had its own sighting system (auto sights), which enabled the gun detachment to engage targets up to 6 miles away. For longer ranges Fire Control South, which was located just above Mediterranean Road on the southern slopes, was used. The Observation Post at FCS had a powerful telescope, part of the sighting equipment called a ‘Depression Position Finder’. The DPF was trained on the target by the operator who would then follow it continuously. At the same time a roamer, attached to the base of the telescope, was dropped on a chart which contained the arc of fire, which, as the telescope moved, traced the target’s course, range and relative speed. After a minute of trace was achieved on the chart, the roamer’s scale was turned against the trace line and all the target information required could then be read from the

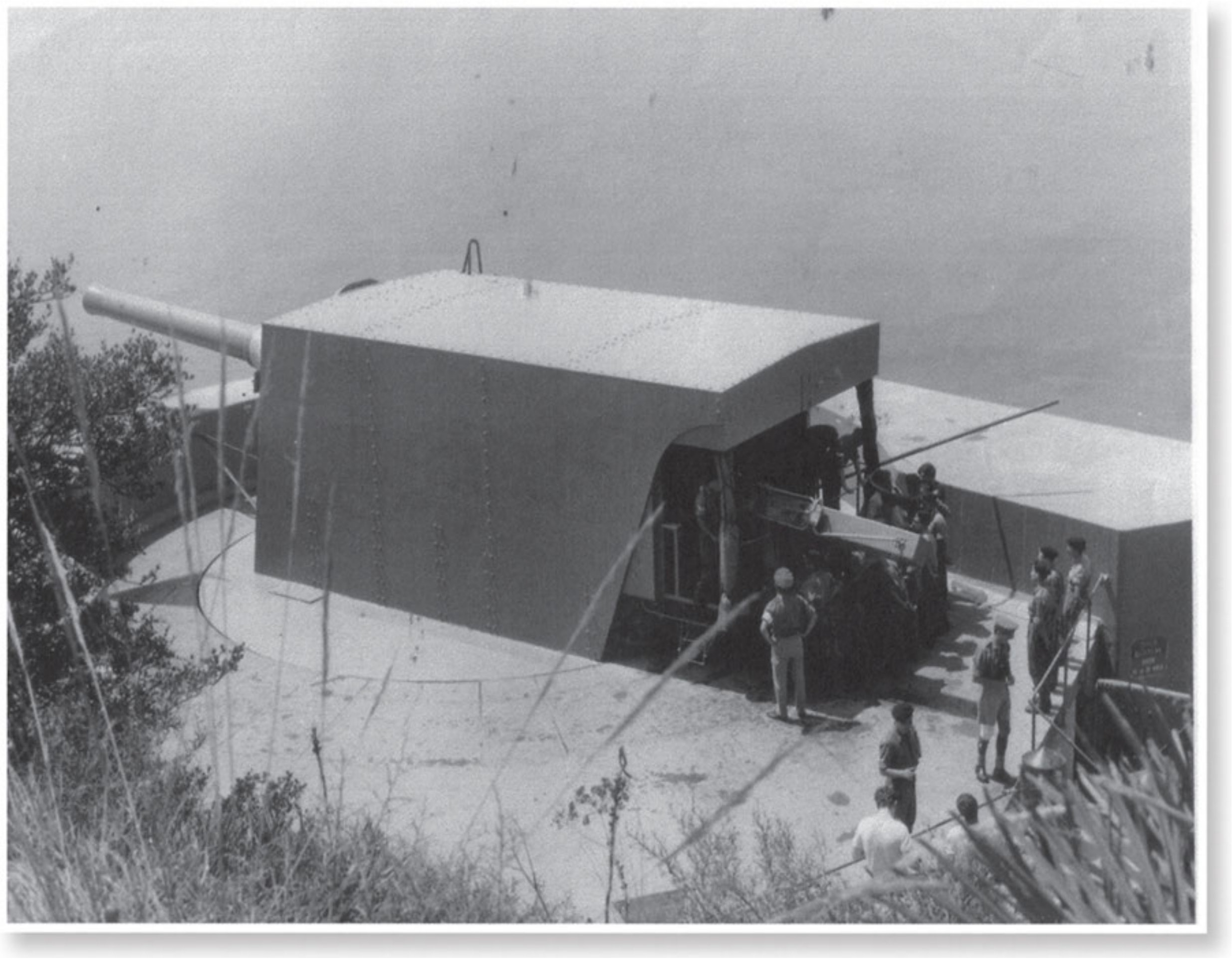
scale. This was now passed up to the ‘Fire Direction Table’ (FDT) in a separate room above.

The FDT was, essentially, a hand-operated computer which, once the information was fed into it, computed the elevation and the ‘aim off’ required to account for the target’s speed and range. This information for the line and elevation layers was displayed on dials which were continuously updating. Up on the guns, the line and elevation layers had similar dials, each with a dot and a pointer. The dot moved, based on the target information being sent up and the layers assimilated this by manually keeping their pointers in line with the dot. This action kept the guns training on the moving target; the engagement method being effective up to the battery’s maximum range of just under 17 miles.

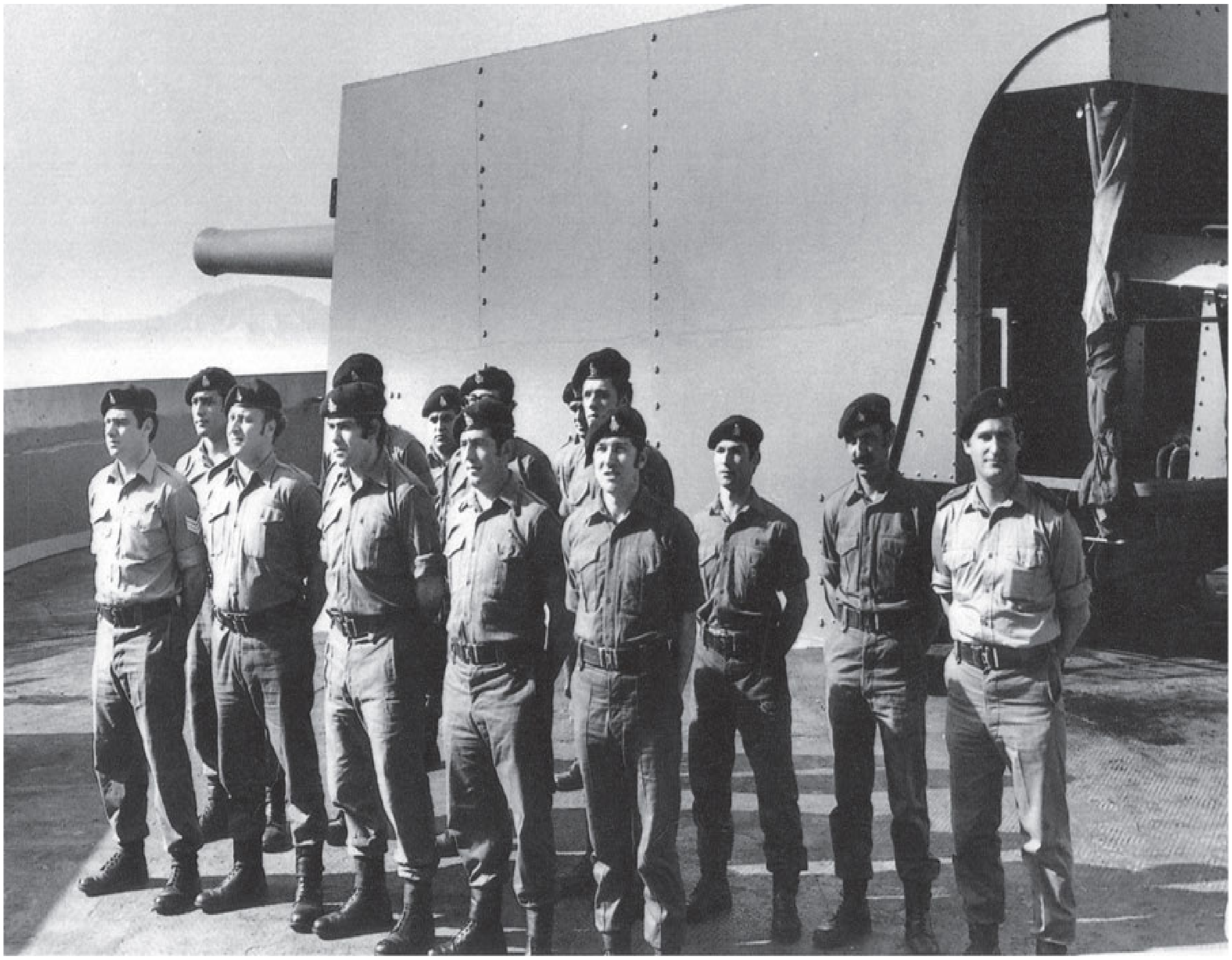
The sighting system operated on the basis of the known range to the target, together with the known height of the battery above sea level, and the state of the tide. Other methods however could be used to fire landwards, when targets would be at differing heights above sea level. This was through a method of ranging with helicopters or aircraft assisting in spotting the fall of shot. Although the Heavy Troop was to continue training on these guns the last shoot took place on 7 April 1973.



O’Hara’s Battery in action.



O'Hara's Battery just before its last firing in 1973.



Heavy Troop in 1974.

The Regiment also started to take over further responsibilities. Among these was one unique to Gibraltar, the appointment of an ape keeper. Corporal Alfred Holmes took over this job from Gunner Portlock RA, and virtually turned it into a vocation. At the time there were only two packs of apes on Gibraltar; one keeping to the area of the Apes Den and the other, commonly known as the wild pack, at the north end of the Rock in the area of Rock Gun. Wild or not, they listened to and acted on his commands. One day Sergeant Holmes was seen endeavouring to move the pack that was foraging on the eastern slopes below Rock Gun, onto the crest. Following a series of howls and clicks of the tongue from the Ape Keeper, the pack was soon on parade where they were required to be.

The Ape Keeper Corporal Ernest Asquez, 1970.

It was also at this time that the Regiment took over responsibility for the firing of all gun salutes in Gibraltar. Four 25-pounder guns were taken over from the Royal Artillery for this purpose, as was Devil's Gap Saluting Battery.

On 28 April 1960, the new title and role of the Gibraltar Regiment was formalized at a parade held at John Mackintosh Square commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel C. A. Norton. It consisted of officers and non-commissioned officers of the reserve, the 22nd intake and members of the permanent staff. It was essentially a Changing of the Badge ceremony. The new badges were blessed by His Lordship the Bishop, the Right Reverend

John Farmer Healy, after which they were presented to the Governor and Commander-in-Chief General Sir Charles F. Keightley GCB, GBE, DSO, who then handed them over to Major R. J. Peliza and Major J. M. E. Gareze for issuing to the members of the Regiment on parade. The opportunity was also taken to present His Worship the Mayor of Gibraltar, the Honourable J. S. Hassan CBE, MVO, JP, with a shield bearing the cap badges of the Gibraltar Volunteer Corps, the Gibraltar Defence Force and the Gibraltar Regiment.

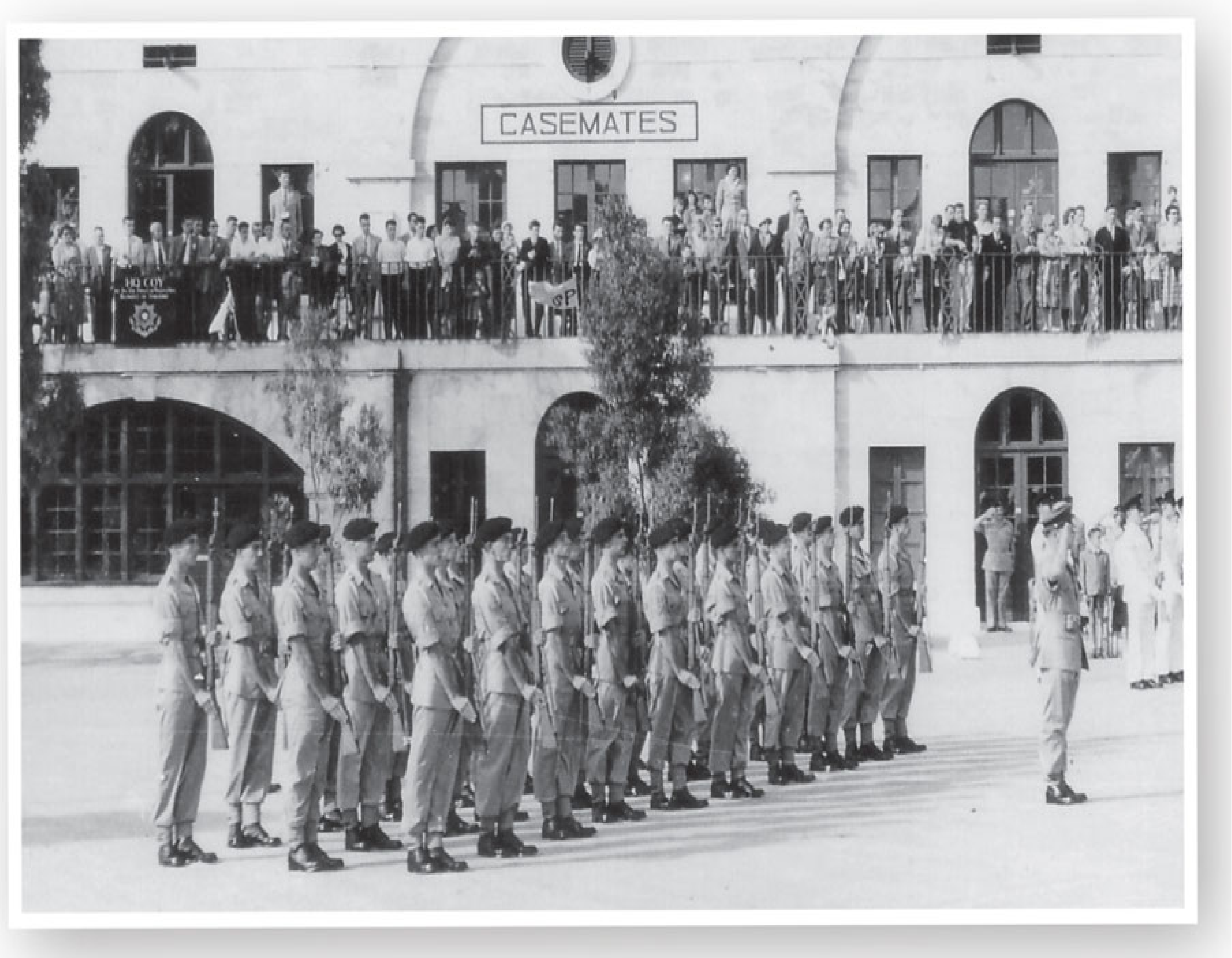
In 1960, the affairs of the Regiment were also discussed by the government again. Once more it was the pay and condition of the regular staff. This followed an article in the Gibraltar Post entitled ‘Gibraltar Regiment Outflanked’ which claimed that the pay was well below that of the British Army and, even worse, considerably below local rates of pay of equivalent jobs and responsibility. The government answered that the responsibility for the Regiment’s pay rested with the War Department but that they understood it had been under review for some time, and following the recent awards to the local industrial employees by the official employers, a similar award to the Regiment was expected shortly. In a nutshell this answer by the government encapsulated the problem that the unit faced at a time when, it would be fair to say, the men felt they were neither fish nor fowl.

However the problem was being vigorously tackled by Fortress Headquarters. In a letter to the Under-Secretary of State at the War Office, the point was being made that a strong case existed for the revision of the rates of pay of the Gibraltar Regiment permanent cadre. At the time, the pay, allowances, pensions and terminal grants were considered by Headquarters to compare unfavourably with equivalent local government services and they feared that it would lead to the loss of valuable instructors.

In February 1960 and March 1961 the Fortress Headquarters submitted requests for the review of pay scales, because big discrepancies had developed over the years between the pay for military personnel and other government bodies, in particular the Civil Police, the Fire Brigade and the Gibraltar Security Police. The figures came back, confirming Headquarters’ fears: a sergeant in the Gibraltar Regiment earned £10 2s 7d a week, which compared unfavourably with the weekly pay for a sergeant in the Civil Police: £12 9s 2d; the Security Police: £12 8s 0d; and the Fire Brigade: £11

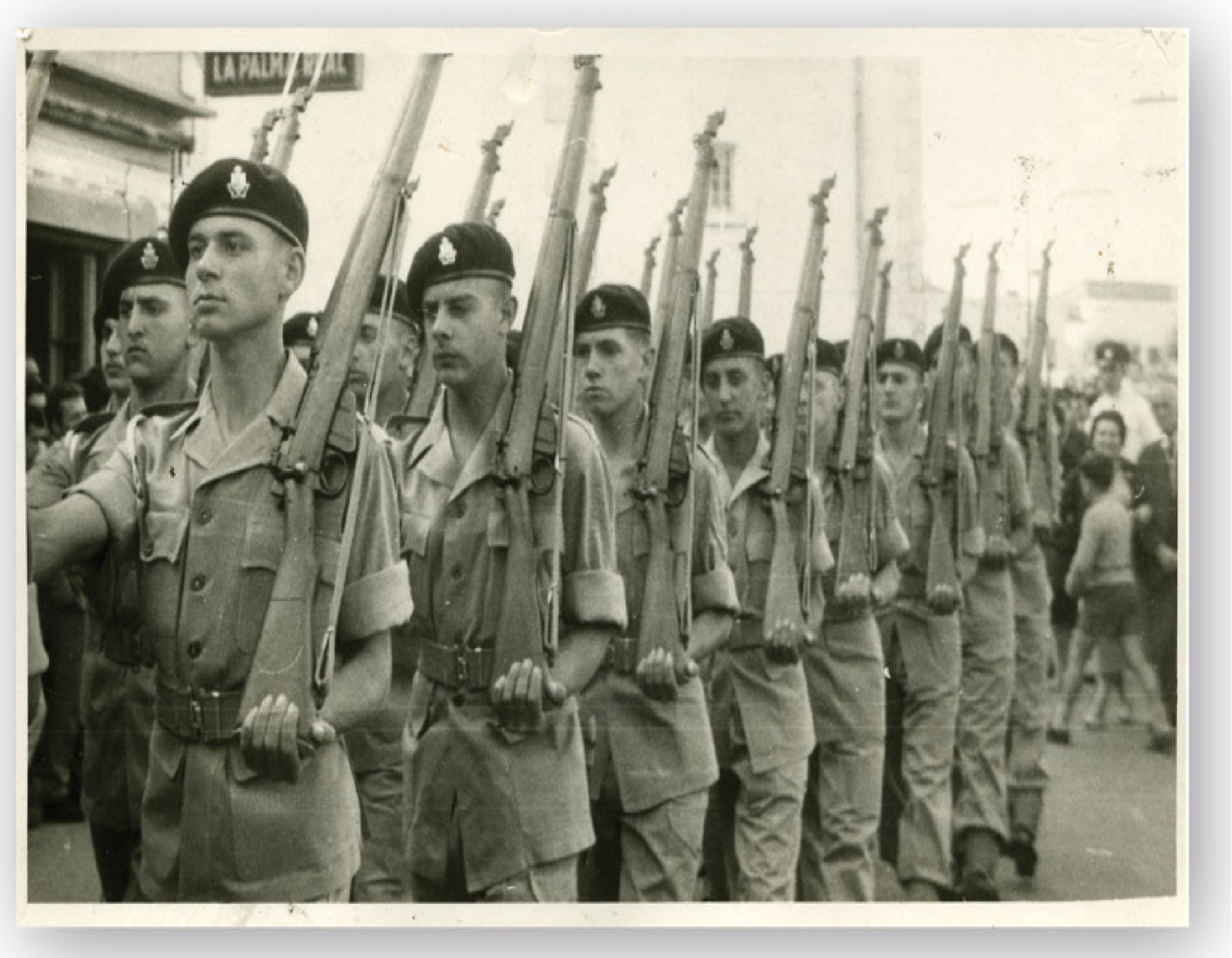
1s 6d. Meanwhile a captain in the Gibraltar Regiment received an annual salary of £1,000 14s 2d, while the annual salary of an assistant secretary in government service was £1,236 0s 0d.

The case made by the local headquarters concluded by stating that the pay and allowances of the officers and senior ranks of the Regiment, using the ranks of captains and sergeant as a comparison, were 17.8 per cent and 24.4 per cent less on average than the equivalent local government services. The differences in conditions were considered to be the cause of great discontent among the senior ranks of the unit, and unless the situation was corrected, the War Office was advised, it would bring an unacceptable rundown over the following two years. In January 1962, the War Office approved the revised rates of non-effective benefits for the permanent cadre of the Gibraltar Regiment. These new rates would apply to those who gave service on or after 31 July 1961. The conditions covering these awards would be the same as those laid down in the Army Pensions Warrant, 1960, for members of the British Army.

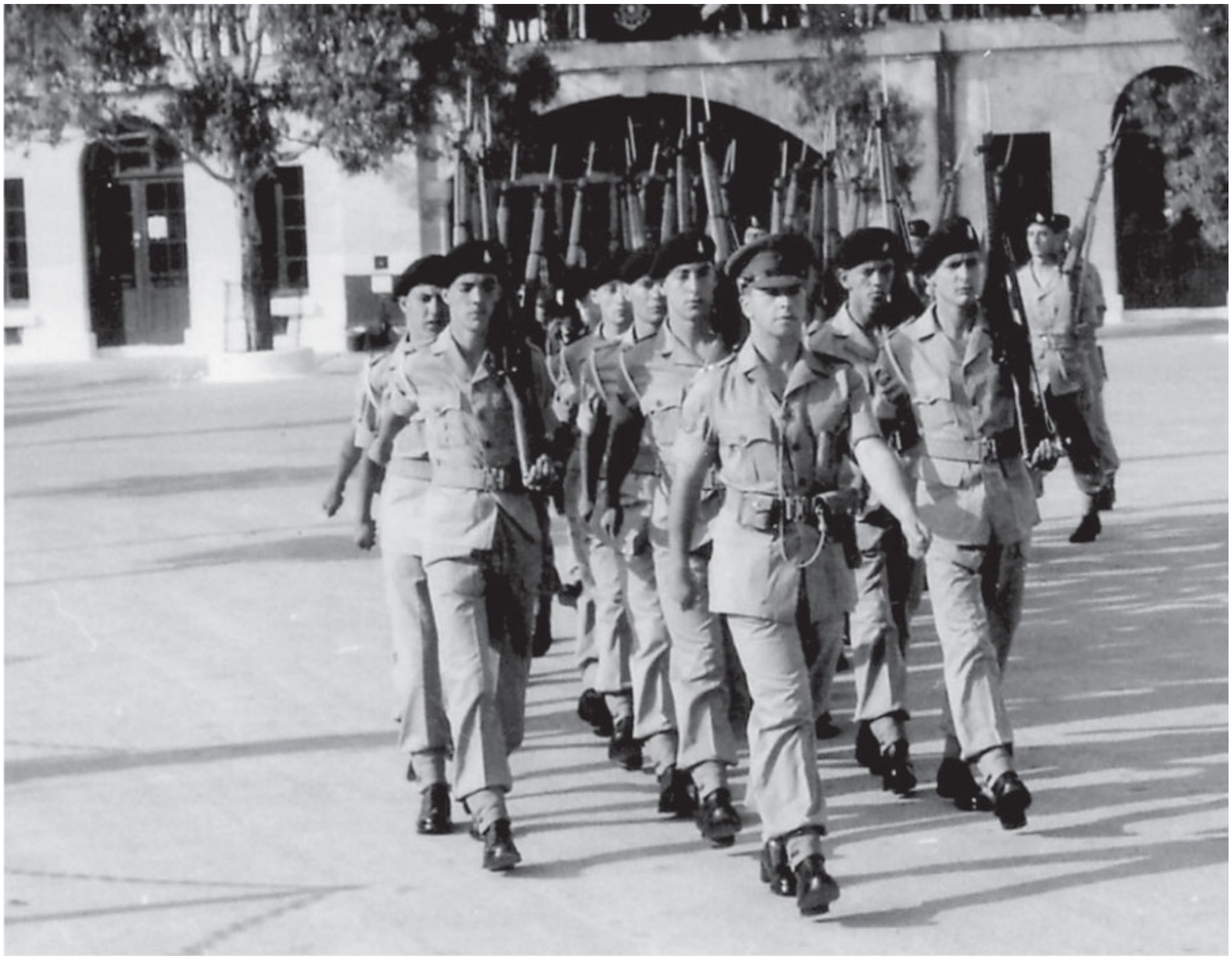

CASEMATES
HQ COY

21st intake Ceremony of the Keys. On parade in Grand Casemates Square.

21st intake Ceremony of the Keys, 1959. Marching off after the ceremony.



21st intake, 1959.



Ceremony of the Keys in 1959, the Port Sergeant carries the key and is protected by the guard.

First aid training in the field, 1965.

Training infantry tactics on the Rock, 1965.

Firing the Bren Gun, 1965.

Signals training.

For the next few years the Regiment concentrated on training the youth of Gibraltar and doing it well. This was evident for all to see from the very visible results of 9.2-inch shoots at towed targets in the Strait, and the excellent displays which continued to be arranged prior to each intake's disembodiment. Young officers, recently returned from infantry courses in the UK, were keen to make training more demanding and interesting. An example was a basic landing exercise carried out with landing barges. The first few of these were designed to train the troops in the basics of coming ashore off the LSAs (Landing Ships Assault) and fighting their way up the beach. Later, the techniques learnt were used as the start of more complex exercises. Lieutenant D. Collado remembers the time he decided that smoke and thunder flashes would add realism to the basic exercises and make the men react more aggressively. As the LSA made for the shore at Camp Bay, smoke covered the beach and the thunder flashes bursting in the sea simulated mortar shells landing. The men crouched eagerly waiting for the ramp to go down but before this could happen, a thunder flash overrun by the LST exploded under the wooden bottom and extreme realism took over, as the mortally wounded LST sank a few metres from the shore.

The result of this type of training is obvious in the statement of E. M. Britto, Commanding Officer of the Regiment 1982–85, who said about his time as a conscript:

I was called up in 1961 in the 24th intake. I distinctly remember being a very disgruntled conscript to start off with. I had every intention of making life as difficult as possible for everybody if I could. My aim at the time was to attend university, not do four months conscription. However, over the four months I was converted and as soon as my time was up, I volunteered to stay on in the reserve. I had been completely convinced of its usefulness and I felt it did something for the youth. It served to get people to mix who would otherwise probably never even meet.

The exercises were always a highlight. Britto remembers that:

The really good ones were the first ones. The beauty of them was that they were realistic; the ‘enemy’ had complete freedom to act. The perceived threat at the time was of the ‘maverick’ saboteur or General that would normally build up over a period of about a month. The whole Garrison including the police force would be taking part. We were briefed on our tasks, but we had no idea of what the friendly forces were doing or of their deployments, etc. The police normally had our pictures or certainly of some of us. Some instance which come to mind are of the Colonels Ferrary and Guerrero [subalterns at the time] hiding out for 36 hours prior to carrying out an attack and launching it when the exercise had in fact finished. On another occasion myself and David Hooper broke into the police station after moving over rooftops and going over the side of building with ropes. We broke into the office of Superintendent Llambias. All hell broke loose that day. Later these exercises became more controlled: instead of breaking a padlock you had to put a tape on it, but this did not allow you to get through.

On 28 April 1964 the Gibraltar Regiment celebrated its 25th anniversary. To celebrate this event the 27th intake, which was carrying out its military training at the time, performed the Ceremony of the Keys in a crowded Casemates Square.

During this period the first Honorary Aide-de-Camp to the Governor to be appointed was nominated from among the officers of the Regiment. He was Captain C. A. Munford. His appointment commenced in January 1965 ending in 1968, and he was to be followed by other regimental officers. This appointment continues to the present day, though in 1997 the appointment ceased to be an honorary title and was changed to Aide-de-Camp to the Governor and Commander-in-Chief.

On 10 April 1965 Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Norton was entertained by his troops at the All Ranks Club on the occasion of his retirement from the Regiment and army life. He was presented with a silver cigarette case. That evening he was dined out by the officers at the Hargraves Mess and presented with an engraved silver salver by the Honorary Colonel on behalf of the officers. Since 1939, when he joined up as one of the ‘first fifty’, he had served for 26 years.

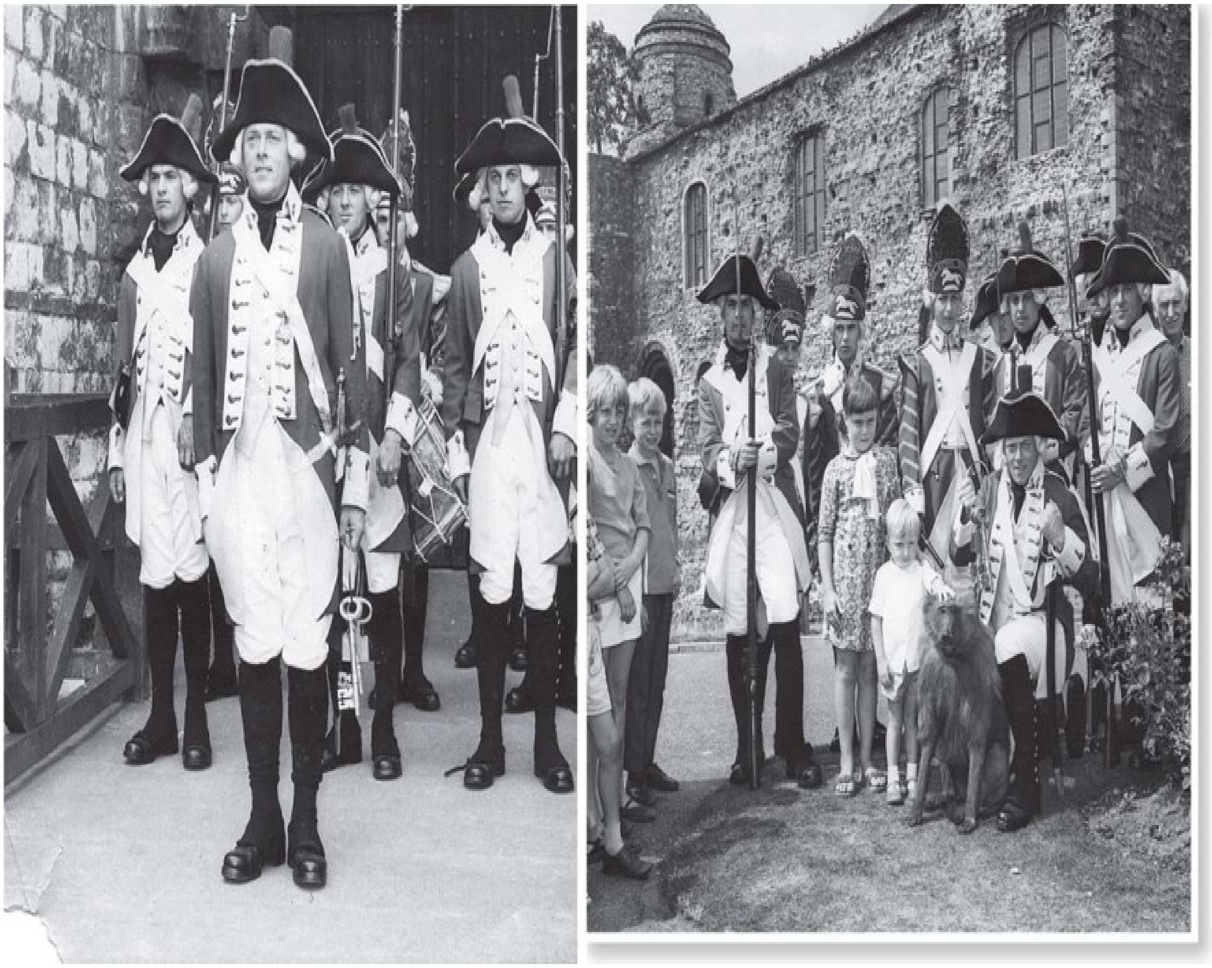
In early March 1967 the Officers’ Mess and Training Centre at Hargraves was handed back and the Regiment took over the Buena Vista Mess, which had formerly been the fortress Officers’ Mess. This was a vast improvement from the old mess both in size and layout, and one which afforded the regimental officers an excellent facility. It consisted of a large dining room, an anteroom and a separate bar area. At the south end of the mess were the accommodation, kitchen and secretary’s office. Downstairs there was another large function room leading out to a garden area. In future years this venue was to be used for the annual summer ball, which was to become a highlight on the regimental calendar. Following some alterations and decoration the mess was officially inaugurated on 11 June with a dinner night at which the Governor and the Chief Minister were guests of the Regiment.

The same month also saw a rather unusual spectacle: members of the Regiment were selected to provide the Escort to the Keys in period costume at the Colchester Tattoo in England together with the Royal Anglian Regiment, who would provide the outpost platoon. The overall importance of this event becomes clear from the fact that the expired passport belonging to one member of the group, Corporal Mascarenhas, was renewed within an hour! The initial training was interesting as, in addition to the format of the parade, the troops had to learn 17th-century arms drill and marching – which was more of a saunter than a modern march. The Great Siege period uniforms arrived, and when on-site rehearsals began the Gibraltarians saw for the first time that the city walls of Gibraltar had been recreated around the arena. Included in the scene, perched on one of the towers was a ‘Gibraltar Ape’ which unfortunately, though rather amusingly, was represented by a stuffed baboon. The Tattoo was held on 4 and 5 August 1967 and was a spectacular success, with 450 musicians from ten massed bands and the Gibraltar Ceremony of the Keys forming the well-received finale.

Two changes took place in the summer of 1968 at each end of the rank spectrum. The former Commanding Officer Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Norton MBE ED, who had retired in April 1965, was appointed Honorary Colonel of the Regiment, taking over from Willie Thomson OBE JP. At the other end of the spectrum, the longest-serving soldier Private Joseph Garcia, who had joined on 2 September 1939, retired. On embodiment he had served as a member of the GDF with 3rd Coast Regiment Royal Artillery manning the guns at Breakneck and Spyglass Batteries. He was later to train and deploy with the Lewis gun and then the 3.7-inch anti-aircraft guns at Napier Battery. After a spell as a GDF member with the Royal Signals and as an orderly with the Garrison Employment Company, he was posted back to the GDF. Private Garcia then served in the quartermaster’s store for some years before his retirement and had become a well-known character in that department. He must have kitted out hundreds of recruits and had a way of convincing all and sundry that everything he issued fitted.

Colchester Tattoo, June 1967

Sergeant Cliff Bray.



From left: Corporal James Ferro, Sergeant Cliff Bray, Corporal ‘Mec’ Mascarenhas, Corporal John Ritchie.

THE GIBRALTAR REGIMENT AND THE SPANISH THREAT, 1969

In the 1960s, the political relationship between Gibraltar and Spain hit a new low. Since 1954, the government of Spain under the leadership of Francisco Franco had been applying increasingly restrictive measures in its relationships with Gibraltar. Upon the request of resolution 2070 of the United Nations General Assembly (approved on 16 December 1965), the governments of Spain and the United Kingdom started formal talks on the status of Gibraltar during 1966. These remained inconclusive and in 1967 a referendum was held in Gibraltar to establish the will and the interest of the population. The two options presented to Gibraltarians were: ‘To pass under Spanish sovereignty in accordance with the terms proposed by the Spanish Government to Her Majesty’s Government on 18 May 1966’; or ‘Voluntarily to retain their link with Britain, with democratic local institutions and with Britain retaining its present responsibilities’.

The outcome could not have been clearer: 12,138 of the 12,237 voters chose ‘voluntarily to retain their link with Britain’, an overwhelming majority of 99.19 per cent. The referendum was condemned by the United Nations’ General Assembly and was not recognized by any international body or state. Therefore, it did not come as a huge shock that the United Nations voted on 18 December 1968 to return Gibraltar to Spanish control on 1 October 1969, thus demanding an end to the ‘colonial experience’. This move was not surprising considering the ongoing decolonization worldwide at the time, particularly in Africa.

As a consequence of the referendum and the deteriorating political relations with Spain the UK government promulgated the Gibraltar Constitution Order in 1969, which stated that ‘Her Majesty’s government will never enter into negotiations under which the people of Gibraltar would pass under the sovereignty of another state against their democratically expressed wishes’. The constitution was published on 30 May 1969 and came into immediate effect. The Spanish government described the order as an open disregard by the UK government of the UN resolutions and a violation of the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht; on 7 July 1969, the Spanish government closed the land border between Spain and Gibraltar.

The closing of the border, together with various other restrictions, was a severe shock for the Gibraltarians, who felt that across the frontier there was a hostile foreign power. The situation would last 13 years and was considered by the Gibraltarians as the last in a series of Spanish sieges to attempt to secure the surrender of the town. The border gates remained firmly locked even after Franco's death in 1975. They were opened for the first time in 13 years shortly after midnight on 15 December 1982. Normal border traffic resumed only in 1985.

In the lead up to 1 October 1969 – the original date set for the decolonization of Gibraltar by the United Nation General Assembly – it was considered that the Rock had to be ready for any eventuality, including armed response to a Spanish military invasion. The major concerns were the lack of anti-aircraft defences and field artillery to provide direct fire in defence of the airfield. Although 105mm pack howitzers could be made available, this was not possible until late in 1969. It was therefore decided to provide the Regiment with 40mm L/70 anti-aircraft guns for its direct-fire role and air-defence tasks. The 40/70s came in a hurry. The request was placed on 4 June and, by the 25th of the same month, they had arrived, preceded by Royal School of Artillery instructors who had been sent over to train members of the Regiment on their operation. The reasoning behind the prompt delivery was to enable the 37th intake, due to be embodied in May, to be trained on the 40mm L/70s. This meant that this intake would be effective on the equipment well before 1 October, when a possible situation could be expected to develop on the expiration of the United Nations resolution.

By early August, the 37th intake and the non-commissioned officers from the permanent staff had finished their initial training on the new equipment and had carried out their first live firing practice at towed seaborne targets from 'Brewery Crusher' range. This event caused much amusement, as J. J. Porral, the later Commanding Officer of the Regiment, remembers: 'I remember Varyl Begg [the Governor] as an ex-Navy gunner wanting to be right up to the guns. Unfortunately, he was in his whites and the dust displaced by the guns played havoc with his uniform'.

Also, in August a further eight 40mm L/70 guns and associated equipment arrived. These were placed in storage accommodation in a state of deep preservation and were intended to reinforce the Royal Artillery battery that would be sent out should the operational need arise. As 1 October approached, the garrison in Gibraltar was stood-to. The main threat, while never discounting the possibility of a full-scale assault against Gibraltar, was thought to be posed by rogue generals or fanatics, who might organize landings or incursions with limited forces, but which, if successful, could gain the support of Franco's Spain. As 1 October approached all permanent staff were recalled and training camps were stopped. The companies of the Regiment were placed under operational control of the Royal Irish Rangers, the resident battalion at the time. The 2nd Battalion Black Watch were also in Gibraltar at the time on an unaccompanied operational tour, brought about by the situation. They had taken over from the extra frontier company which normally patrolled the frontier during this period. Following the various 'orders groups' all the forces deployed. The area of the frontier was held by the Black Watch with the RAF securing the airfield. 1st Battalion Irish Rangers were to hold the area from Eastern Beach to the Sandy Bay Police Post and provided a presence on the Upper Rock. The Royal Engineers held the area from the Police Post to the area of Nuns Well at Europa Point and also certain town areas. B Company and the permanent staff of the Gibraltar Regiment held the area from the lighthouse to Parsons Lodge including Rosia Bay and Camp Bay, with another sub-unit in the area of the Waterworks and Moorish Castle. The Royal Navy and the RAF secured the dockyard area.

Some of these areas were stretched for manpower and although their tasking was mainly manning observation posts and cut-offs, they did not have a great deal of depth in their defence. This was countered by the resident battalion providing a reserve from their remaining companies, and an attached company from 1st Battalion Black Watch. This reserve would be deployed as required should a situation develop.

Over the next few days numerous changes were made to the deployment but the overall plan remained largely the same. In the early morning on each day the reserve would sweep through back areas and the Upper Rock in order to clear them of potential infiltrators. As the days passed and hostile actions did not materialize, the perceived threat eased and the company returned to its final days of training and then disembodied. The threat of an attack on Gibraltar had not materialized, but it was not all over yet.

Following B Company's deployment by just a couple of weeks a second situation developed involving units of the Spanish Navy. During the evening and night Spanish naval forces, including its flagship Dedalo – a light aircraft carrier which had seen service in the Pacific during the Second World War – entered the Bay of Gibraltar, with some units anchoring in the northern anchorage. It was a show of strength without much potential tactical value, but it could not be ignored. So, once again a regimental sub-unit, in this case the Air Defence Troop, was deployed. The 40mm L/70s and their crews were moved fully armed to an assembly area at North Front and there they remained while the naval force was kept under surveillance. Once again the threat eventually subsided and the Air Defence Troop returned to barracks without having to carry out a tactical deployment.

The Governor, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Varyl Begg, inspects the troops in Grand Casemates Square, 1969.

The potential threat that was posed to Gibraltar and the Gibraltar Regiment was in line with the general scenarios that the Regiment had to prepare for at the time. In a major war it would deploy the battery to man the 9.2-inch guns and the 40mm L/70s together with one company to augment the resident battalion. Other sub-units from the Regiment could take on the very complex task of administering and controlling the population should it be necessary to afford it shelter within the Rock's tunnel system, for example after a nuclear attack. The Regiment was particularly suited to this task due to its continuity and local knowledge, and the ability of most of its members to speak English and Spanish. The tunnel entrances were designed with a combination of blast walls and irregularly shaped access points, to contain the initial detonation effect of nuclear bombs.

The second scenario was limited war. In the event of a period of protracted tension, the immediate call-up company would deploy initially. This is what happened in October 1969 except that, because B Company had been undergoing training at that time, it was this sub-unit that was tasked.

THE ABOLITION OF NATIONAL SERVICE

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THE POLITICAL DEBATE, 1960–71

In the UK, all call-ups for National Service formally ended on 31 December 1960 and the last National Servicemen left the armed forces in May 1963. It was clear that this decision would also have repercussions for Gibraltar and the Gibraltar Regiment. In April 1960, the Governor, General Sir Charles Keightley, wrote to the Under-Secretary of State at the War Office in April 1960 and stated that as a consequence of the abolition of National Service in the United Kingdom it would be necessary to legislate further in order to enable conscription to continue in Gibraltar. He outlined a plan for a regiment that would be a short-service, combined regular and Territorial battalion, fit for service both in peace and war. In peacetime it would be capable of taking over from the resident battalion while they were away on training in Africa or deployed elsewhere and it would also be of great value in case troops were required to aid the civil power. The existence of the Gibraltar Regiment, with the consequent financial and social sacrifice, would also be a very forthright demonstration of the colony's determination to support Her Majesty government's policy of securing the security of the fortress. Its disbandment on the other hand, would surely be used as propaganda by hostile elements. In global war, the Governor reasoned, the successful outcome of the fight for survival would depend on the ability to make full use of all available manpower, formed into a disciplined force. He also felt that the peculiar geographical situation in Gibraltar increased the manpower demands. The population would need to be managed and without the Gibraltar Regiment – the members of which knew most of the local population and were also able to speak Spanish – this problem would be much more difficult to manage. The Governor felt that, with a little reorganization, the establishment of the Regiment could be adapted to suit these requirements admirably. This would provide, after initial training, a Class 'A' Reserve (i.e. men up to 28) from which the bulk of the unit would be mobilized and a Class 'B' Reserve (i.e. men aged 28–41) from which senior officers, warrant officers, senior non-commissioned officers and certain specialists could be found.

The Bofors 40mm L/70 Anti-Aircraft Gun

By the end of the Second World War, jet aircraft had so increased the speed of attack that the anti-aircraft weapons used during the war could not efficiently engage an aircraft before it was already out of range. A new gun, with a longer range and a higher rate of fire, would have to be designed.

The first version of the new gun was produced by Bofors in 1947 and entered Swedish service in 1951. In November 1953 it was accepted as the NATO standard anti-aircraft gun, and was soon produced in the thousands. The guns were in widespread use within NATO until the 1980s when they were replaced by the Roland Surface-to-Air-Missile.

The Bofors gun during the 1977 Regimental Open Day.

It seemed inconceivable that sufficient 18-year-olds would volunteer for full-time training followed by part-time Territorial service to support the requirements of this establishment, and therefore some form of National Service would be essential. However the Governor was prepared to make some concessions which he considered to be necessary if there was to be local support for National Service in Gibraltar after it had ceased in the UK. Consideration had to be given to helping the youth, who in conditions of full employment were either the main providers for their families or were key members of small businesses. It was felt that six months of military service was too long, that the loss of earnings was too great and to remove all 18-year-olds from local jobs at once was too great a strain. In any case it was thought that the training tasks could be done within a shorter call-up period. The solution he put forward in order to both obtain the manpower requirement and also meet the local objections to National Service at least to a considerable extent, was to a) call up all eligible youths each year as at present, but in two halves, each for only four months. This would not only shorten the period of compulsory service but would also meet local difficulties – when two men in a family or business were both liable to serve in the same year they could be called up in different batches; and b) to increase the pay of National Servicemen by up to one third. This was expected to go far in meeting the local concern of reduced earnings during a man's compulsory service, particularly as so often he was the breadwinner. It would cost no more than pay had for six months previously and indeed there would still be an overall saving in rations, etc., by one third.

Militarily, it was believed that the shorter, but more concentrated period of full training would entail practically no loss of efficiency, particularly as one of the 14-day reserve camps would be incorporated in the fourth month of National Service training, thereby matching the officers and non-commissioned officers with the junior men. The other two reserve camps would be concerned with the training of specialist detachments in the so-called support company.

This letter was followed by some discussion between the Governor and other governmental bodies, not least the War Office. The War Office was among the first ones to reply and it seems that its haste was driven by a familiar topic – money. It made the point that it was the War Office that met the full cost of the Gibraltar Regiment 'except for a very small contribution of £3,500 from the Gibraltar Government'. Despite these issues the Gibraltar Regiment was accepted as an operational requirement by the War Office at the end of May 1960 and the proposal was to be sent to ECAC (Executive Committee of the Army Council) for a final decision.

For the time being, things continued as normal, but it became more and more obvious that times were getting harder for the supporters of National Service in Gibraltar. It was in July 1966 when a new publication appeared in Gibraltar. Social Action was a newsletter, the mouthpiece of a group called The Young Christian Workers. They would come together to consider all the problems which they felt they faced at the time, and following this they would publish their views on the subject in their newsletter. Time passed, and when members of the group were to be called up for National Service a new faction formed, known as the Action Group for Abolition of Conscription (AGAC). The group claimed that it would be nothing more than a pressure group and maintained that, when conscription was abolished, AGAC would come to an end. When in January 1971 one man was arrested and jailed for refusing to do his National Service, AGAC kept the situation in the public eye by singing outside the prison every night and collecting signatures for the abolition of conscription. A demonstration was held outside the House of Assembly where leaflets were handed out to elected members as they entered the House. A great many letters on the subject appeared in the local press during this time.

The debate on conscription in Gibraltar was gaining pace and by the end of December 1970 sections of the national press, including the Sunday Telegraph, were making enquiries on the question of National Service. In a reply to this paper from the ‘Gibraltar and South Atlantic Department’ the point was made that as far as the department was aware, Gibraltar was the only remaining dependent territory that still had an effective form of peacetime conscription. The only other place that had some form of peacetime compulsory military service was Bermuda; there, a selective US-style draft system was in place, whereby names were chosen by lot from a register.

The question of whether or not there should be conscription in Gibraltar obtained considerable exposure in local circles. AGAC launched a petition in December 1970; the following month the Governor Sir Varyl Begg met a delegation from the group, and received the petition signed by 6,300 people requesting the end to conscription in Gibraltar. A frank discussion ensued in which the Governor persuaded AGAC to state in public that any measures they took to further their aim would always be within the law. This appeared in a joint communiqué where the Governor also stated that ‘the abolition of conscription was a question for the will of the people of Gibraltar’.

This caused a bit of a stir in the Foreign Office. The Superintending Under-Secretary in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Sir Leslie Monson, was uneasy about the part of the Governor’s contribution in the communiqué which gave the final choice of whether to abolish or continue conscription to the people of the colony through their elected representatives. It was thought that it would be difficult for British ministers to insist on conscription in Gibraltar if public opinion in the colony was strongly opposed to it. However, under the constitution, defence was the Governor’s responsibility and he could not transfer it to his ministers. The Governor had in fact been careful to define the differences between the responsibilities for conscription and defence. In a letter to the Commonwealth Office, relating to his meeting with members of AGAC, he made the point and ended this letter with:

> In the event we had a friendly, useful and as I hope, educative meeting at which I made it quite clear that in England we had, by democratically reached decision, given up conscription and that if the people of Gibraltar similarly wanted to give it up it was a matter for their decision, although of course this must be arrived at within the law…

In Gibraltar the ‘will of the people’ was being put into practice through the elected representatives. In early January 1971, the Chief Minister gave notice to the Clerk of the House of Assembly that he proposed to move a motion for the appointment of a select committee to consider the question of conscription. The committee had no sight of classified information of the Gibraltar Defence plans or the defence responsibilities of the Gibraltar Regiment. Accordingly, their considerations did not include the shape or size of any possible new unit, if it was decided that conscription should go. Their main considerations were how the decision would affect Gibraltar, the existing regular members of the permanent staff and the principle of whether Gibraltarians should continue assisting in the defence of the Rock.

By 14 April 1971 the select committee had finalized their work and were able to present their report. It was debated in the House on that date and accepted. It was a wide-ranging document covering the decision on conscription and the overall concept for the future of the Regiment together with recommendations on every foreseeable eventuality in the future. The Select Committee made the following recommendations:

1. That compulsory military service in Gibraltar should cease not later than 31 July 1972.

2. That Gibraltar should continue to make an effective contribution to its defence by the recruitment of a Volunteer Force with commitments similar to those of the Gibraltar Regiment at present.

3. That every effort should be made to reduce substantially the number of reservists attending biannual training camps during the transition period.

4. That every effort should be made to enlist the active support of all representative bodies, and of the public in general, in connection with the raising of the Volunteer Force.

5. That the recruiting campaign for this force should be launched as soon as practicable.

6. That bearing in mind the desirability to keep the transitional period down to a minimum, statuary provision should be made to require the authority of the House of Assembly for any individual intake which it might be considered necessary to embody during the first half of 1972.

7. That it was absolutely essential that the position of the present members of the permanent cadre of the Gibraltar Regiment should be safeguarded.

8. That every effort should be made to make the Volunteer Unit as attractive as possible in terms of (a) personal emoluments, (b) status, and (c) conditions of service, especially as regards the provision of social, recreational and sporting activities.

1971: ‘Fits!’ – the usual comment when recruits are issued with uniforms.

THE IMPACT ON THE REGIMENT

When the end of conscription was being considered, the Regiment consisted of a battalion headquarters with four rifle companies and an artillery battery with a heavy troop (9.2-inch guns) and a light troop (40mm L/70 guns). Apart from the permanent staff (regulars) and the volunteer reservists who had an increased quota of training, the remainder were conscript reservists – essentially it was a ‘paper’ army. Lieutenant-Colonel J. J. Porral, Commanding Officer 1969–72, remembered that as part of his takeover as CO he was shown an enormous board with all the names of the members of the Regiment on it. The board showed a force of nearly three battalions. The bulk of the unit consisted of those who had completed their six or four months’ training and in some cases their biannual camps and were liable for call-up in an emergency. These men were trained to a good standard and on call-out would be updated and exercised to achieve a cohesive unit.

The strength of the Regiment at the time was as follows:

Permanent staff	5 officers, 11 warrant officers/sergeants, 31 rank and file
Volunteer reservists	29 officers, 12 warrant officers/sergeants, 32 rank and file
Conscripted reservists	(1) Class A (under 28 years of age) 903 all ranks (2) Class B (between 28 and 41 years of age

The purpose of the A Reserve was to bring the Regiment up to war establishment, if called up under proclamation by the Governor and Commander-in-Chief. All training would be designed to produce the required number of properly trained soldiers who could be deployed in an emergency to carry out wartime tasks. These also included some specialized tasks such as light rescue and monitoring. There were also a selected number of B reservists who could be called up to undertake certain civil defence appointments and other duties.

The Spanish threat was a serious consideration at the time as Spain was continuing to press its claim for sovereignty over Gibraltar, and in so doing, was apparently enjoying the support of the United Nations. However, it was considered a remote possibility that Spain would launch any military adventure unless the Spanish government thought it could achieve virtually a bloodless victory or that it was possible to subdue all or any part of Gibraltar so rapidly as to present the UK and the rest of the world with a fait accompli. For these reasons it was felt that the British military presence had to make it apparent to the Spanish government that a 'bloodless' victory was impracticable. Furthermore, while the garrison was maintained at its current strength, it should be obvious that a very rapid military conquest was not possible. The British concept of the defence of overseas bases at the time was to maintain, at high readiness, a garrison of sufficient strength to deter an aggressor. Should that fail, the garrison had to be capable of holding the position until military or political pressure – if necessary remote from the initial point of action – could operate to restore the situation. The abolition of conscription without any compensating arrangements – to retain the Gibraltar Regiment as a viable military unit – could have been seen by Spain as a weakening of Gibraltarian resolve.

Gibraltar had developed contingency plans to counter both sabotage and a conventional military assault and the Gibraltar Regiment was tasked in both these operations. At the time, it was planned that the Regiment would be embodied in the warning stage and then deployed: one company would be detached to the resident battalion; the Heavy Troop would man the 9.2-inch guns and the Air Defence Troop the 40mm L/70 guns in the ground and anti-helicopter roles, as well as general air defence; and the remaining three companies and Regimental Headquarters would control the 'Area Centre' which was the bulk of the Upper Rock and the eastern coast.

Based on the operational requirements at the time and the need to reduce numbers if conscription was stopped, the basis for the new unit was worked out within the military headquarters. This was to include one rifle company with three platoons (five officers and 109 other ranks), the Heavy Troop (three officers and 41 other ranks), and the Air Defence Troop (two officers and 39 other ranks). Commanding and administering these sub-units was to be done by a headquarters of four officers and 31 other ranks, of which approximately one third would be regular cadre. The conclusion was that, for the defence of Gibraltar at the time, it was essential to maintain the Gibraltar Regiment as a unit of approximately 14 officers and 220 other ranks which could be ready and able to deploy at short notice.

The select committee had made clear that it favoured the formation of a volunteer unit over the formation of a small regular force. It was thought that to have a regular unit of the required size would be extremely costly both in finance and manpower and could not be justified. Also, it was expected that enough young men could be found within Gibraltar for the volunteer unit. In the UK the target strength of the Territorial Army was approximately 1 per cent of the population. In Gibraltar – with a population of about 20,000 at the time – this would have provided a force of 200 men, only slightly short of the required numbers. However it was also considered that there were certain local factors which, if properly exploited, could produce higher numbers of recruits. The two most convincing ones were the fact that the operational task was self-evident and it was likely to endear young men to want to be involved with it. Secondly, in the current state of 'siege' following the closure of the border by Spain there was a distinct lack of social, sporting, and adventurous facilities for young men in Gibraltar, meaning that army life was of particular interest to this group.

Conscription was thought to be necessary, at least for a further short period before the new structure could be implemented. It was also hoped that some of the conscripts would transfer to the new Regiment and the permanent cadre could keep a sense of purpose in arranging their training during the difficult period to come.

It was considered by the headquarters that the overall cost for the Regiment was likely to be less because the new Regiment would be smaller and the training days consequently fewer. It was hoped that these savings would be used to improve training and recreational facilities in Gibraltar; deliver more courses in UK and offer a greater opportunity to train in the UK as a unit. Money was also to be spent for an increase in pay, because it was felt that recruiting the necessary numbers on the existing pay would be very difficult. As a consequence, the pay was increased by 50p per day to coincide with the embodiment of the 40th intake. The Gibraltar government's contribution to the pay of the soldiers increased from 5p to 10p per day.

The existing Volunteer Reserve provided the command element for the Regiment in case of mobilization. The actual recruited strength at the time was 73, broken down as follows: 29 officers, 12 warrant officers and sergeants, 32 rank and file. This total was far more than was needed for the new establishment. The new structure would only allow for 14 officers, so it was necessary to dispense with the services of 15 of the Regiment's keenest supporters. To overcome the obvious disadvantage of such a move an application was made to the Ministry of Defence for permission to keep a special reserve of officers on the same lines as TARO (Territorial Army Reserve of Officers) with a limited training commitment. This was granted and in due course a system was created that was called the 'Off Establishment'. Reservists in this category would provide a reserve to fill vacancies within the new Regiment's establishment, if and when they occurred. They would have a smaller training commitment and, therefore lower emoluments than those within the new establishment and they would not receive an annual bounty. It was always thought that the numbers would gradually fade out. However, much thought was given to providing well-deserved recognition to these personnel who had given sterling service in the past. The ranks affected were two majors, two captains, 11 subalterns and one warrant officer class 2.

In order to fill the new regimental establishment, the following 'On Establishment' volunteer reservists would be required:

	RHQ	Rifle Company	Artillery Battery	Total
Officers	4	4	6	14
Warrant Officer Class 2	1	-	-	1
Staff Sergeant and Sergeant	-	2	9	11
Corporal and below	-	101	61	162

The other considerations foreseen were to do with recruiting and training. Although the view within the Regiment was optimistic, it could not be properly ascertained that Gibraltar's small population had the capacity to provide enough volunteers. This was expected to be become even more difficult in the future, when the base of men who had carried out National Service were no longer available to volunteer. The reasoning behind this possible problem was the short time – just a 14-day camp – which would be available to impart basic training to any men coming in with no previous military experience. In the event, neither of these concerns posed a serious problem.

The day finally came on 7 October 1971: the last conscripts departed Buena Vista Barracks and the era of National Service came to an end in Gibraltar. The Regiment was now reorganized to comprise a headquarters element, an infantry company and an artillery battery consisting of the light air defence and the heavy troop.

THE PRESENTATION OF COLOURS, 1971

The process to grant the Regiment Colours was initiated originally in April 1967, during the tenure of Lieutenant-Colonel J. M. E. Gareze as Commanding Officer. During this time he researched the subject in depth and there followed a series of meetings with the Governor, General Sir Gerald Lathbury, the Deputy Fortress Commander and the Honorary Colonel of the Regiment Willie Thomson. The Deputy Fortress Commander at the time, Brigadier Sam Chambers, helped in no small way to push the process on, and there is no doubt he must have been spurred on by the enthusiasm and keenness of the Honorary Colonel. On completion of all the planning meetings the Governor wrote to the Ministry of Defence supporting the granting of Colours to the Gibraltar Regiment, adding that he considered the honour and right of the Regiment to bear Colours would be of inestimable value in maintaining morale. Its granting would be particularly opportune at a time when Gibraltar was going through the saga of a closed frontier as part of the Spanish campaign to regain sovereignty.

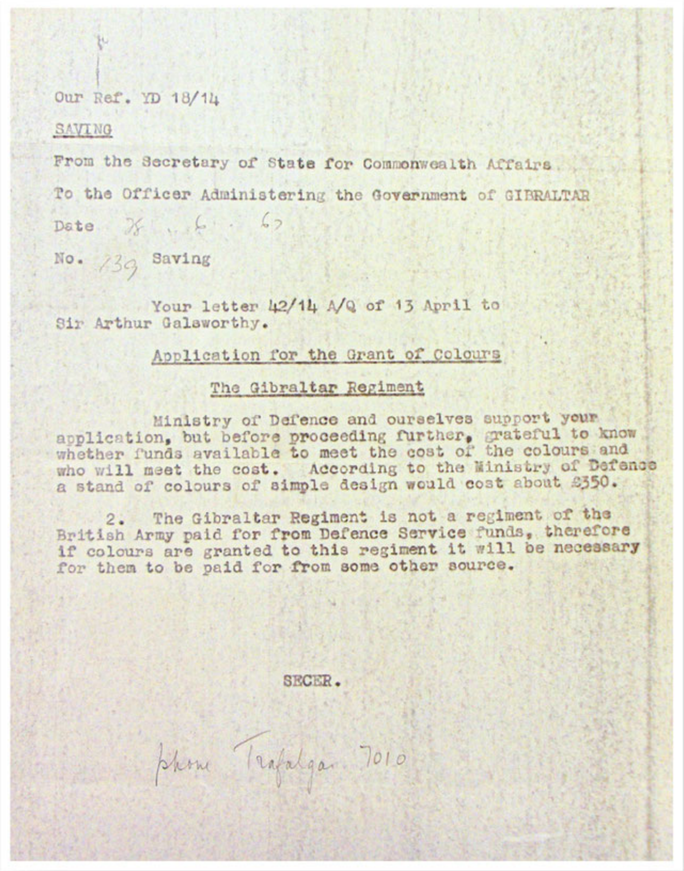
J-M. E. Gareze as Lieutenant-Colonel and Commanding Officer 1965–69.

The Directorate of Personal Services (Army) very quickly stated that, though they wholly approved, it would still be necessary to refer it to other ministries. The queries and letters between ministries began and approval was not a problem from any department, but the question of finance was. At the time the Regiment was not part of the British Army paid for from Defence Service Funds, so, if the Colours were to be granted, it would be necessary to pay for them from some other source. Although there is no doubt that this problem must have been foreseen in Gibraltar, the Governor was officially advised of the situation in June. By August, the problem was solved locally. The Queen's Colour was paid for by the Government of Gibraltar and the Regimental Colour by the Honorary Colonel of the

Regiment. Sadly Sir William Thomson OBE JP was not to see the fruits of his extensive labours in respect to the Colours. He passed away on 5 June 1968 at St Bernard’s Hospital after a short illness.

In the same period that the Colours were approved there was also a request to seek the title ‘Royal’ for the Gibraltar Regiment, but because of the political situation with Spain at the time it was not considered appropriate to confer this honour yet.

The Colours were duly produced and in July 1971 rehearsals for the Presentation of Colours Parade commenced. The drills were initially carried out at Buena Vista Barracks and included foot and rifle drill to bring everyone in the ‘new’ Regiment up to the same standard. Once this was achieved the Guards started drilling together until the time was right for the actual sequence of the parade to be rehearsed. During this phase, the rehearsals moved to Lathbury Barracks square which was large enough to accommodate the three Guards and the Band and Drums of the 3rd Battalion Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, which would be providing the music for the parade.



Our Ref. YD 18/14

SAVING

From the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs

To the Officer Administering the Government of GIBRALTAR

Date 28 . 6 . 67

No. 139 Saving

Your letter 42/14 A/Q of 13 April to Sir Arthur Galsworthy.

Application for the Grant of Colours

The Gibraltar Regiment

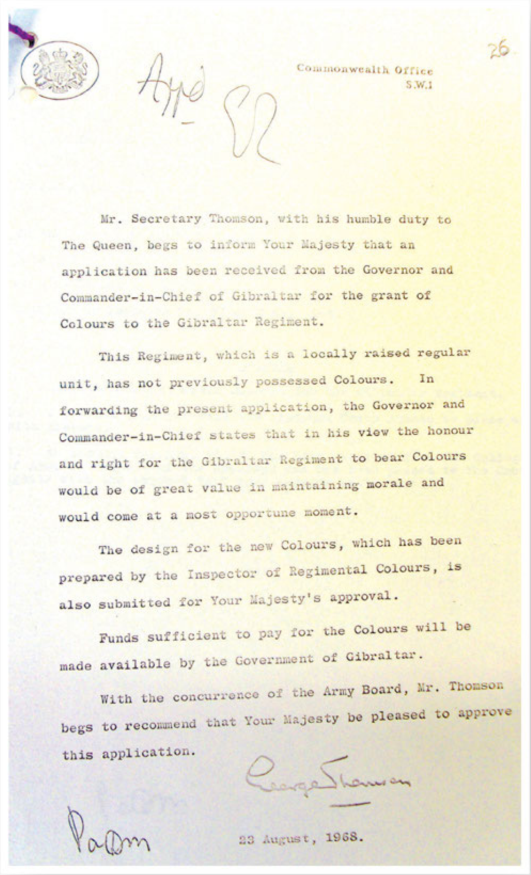
Ministry of Defence and ourselves support your application, but before proceeding further, grateful to know whether funds available to meet the cost of the colours and who will meet the cost. According to the Ministry of Defence a stand of colours of simple design would cost about £350.

2. The Gibraltar Regiment is not a regiment of the British Army paid for from Defence Service funds, therefore if colours are granted to this regiment it will be necessary for them to be paid for from some other source.

SECER.

phone Trafalgar 7010

Letter about the Colours from June 1967.



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Appd ER

Commonwealth Office
S.W.1

Mr. Secretary Thomson, with his humble duty to The Queen, begs to inform Your Majesty that an application has been received from the Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Gibraltar for the grant of Colours to the Gibraltar Regiment.

This Regiment, which is a locally raised regular unit, has not previously possessed Colours. In forwarding the present application, the Governor and Commander-in-Chief states that in his view the honour and right for the Gibraltar Regiment to bear Colours would be of great value in maintaining morale and would come at a most opportune moment.

The design for the new Colours, which has been prepared by the Inspector of Regimental Colours, is also submitted for Your Majesty's approval.

Funds sufficient to pay for the Colours will be made available by the Government of Gibraltar.

With the concurrence of the Army Board, Mr. Thomson begs to recommend that Your Majesty be pleased to approve this application.

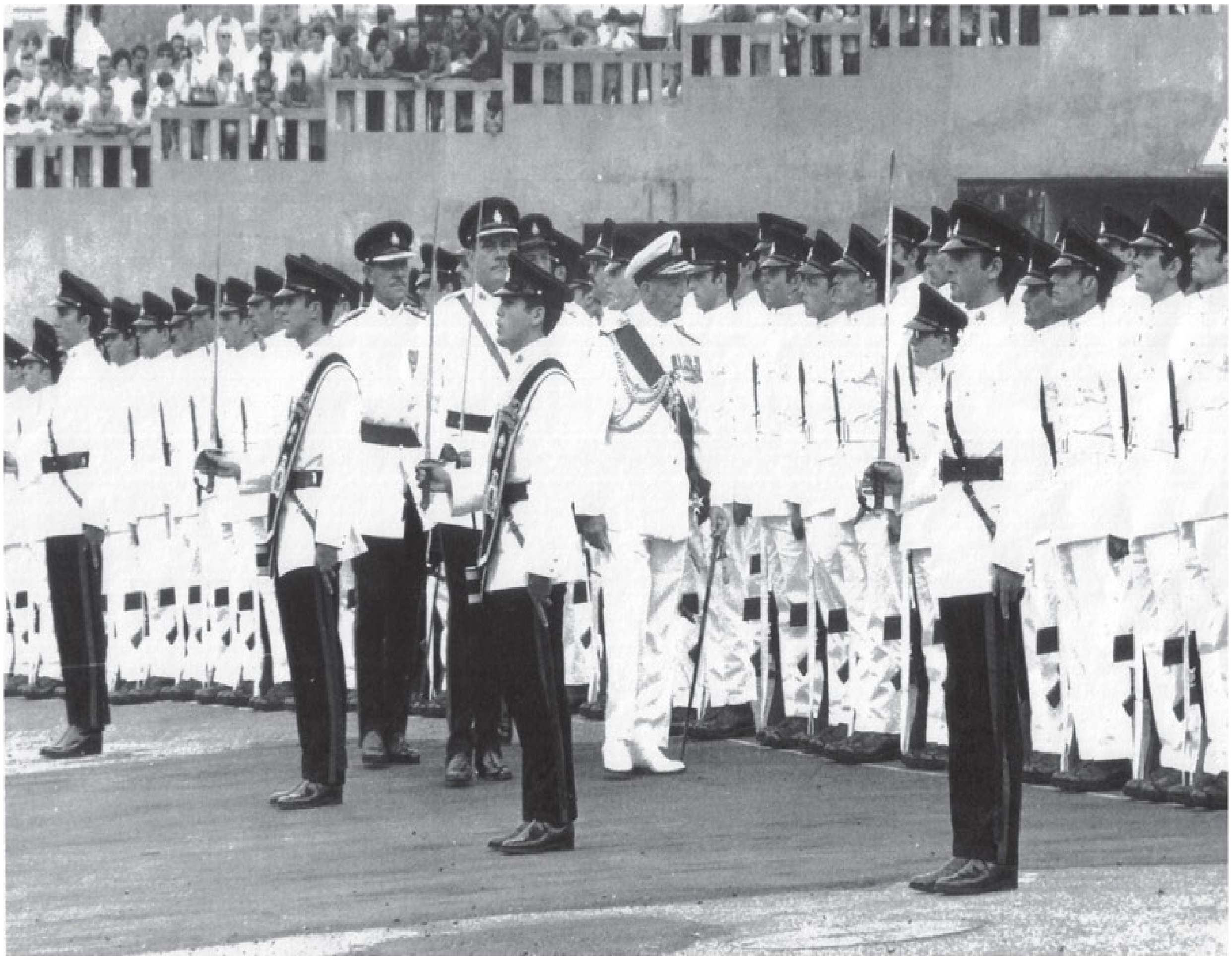
George Thomson

PaOm

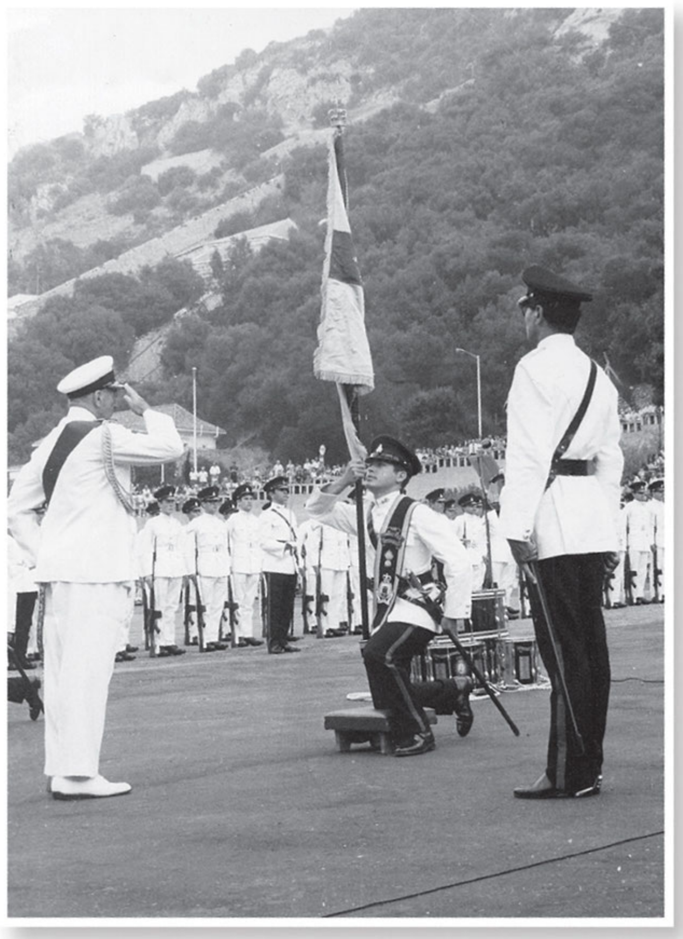
23 August, 1968.

The application to HM the Queen for Colours, 1968.

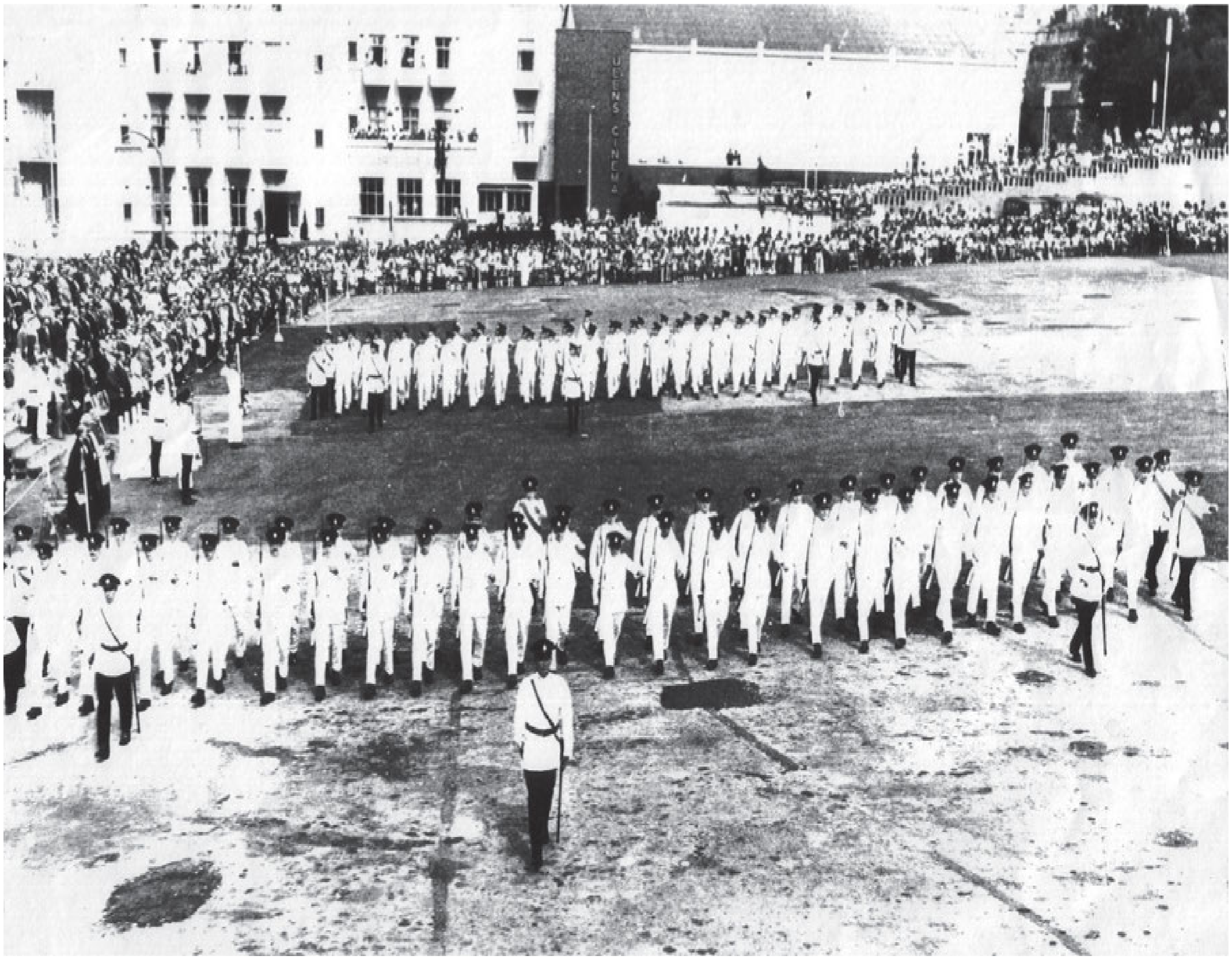
Presentation of the first Colours



The Governor inspects the Regiment.

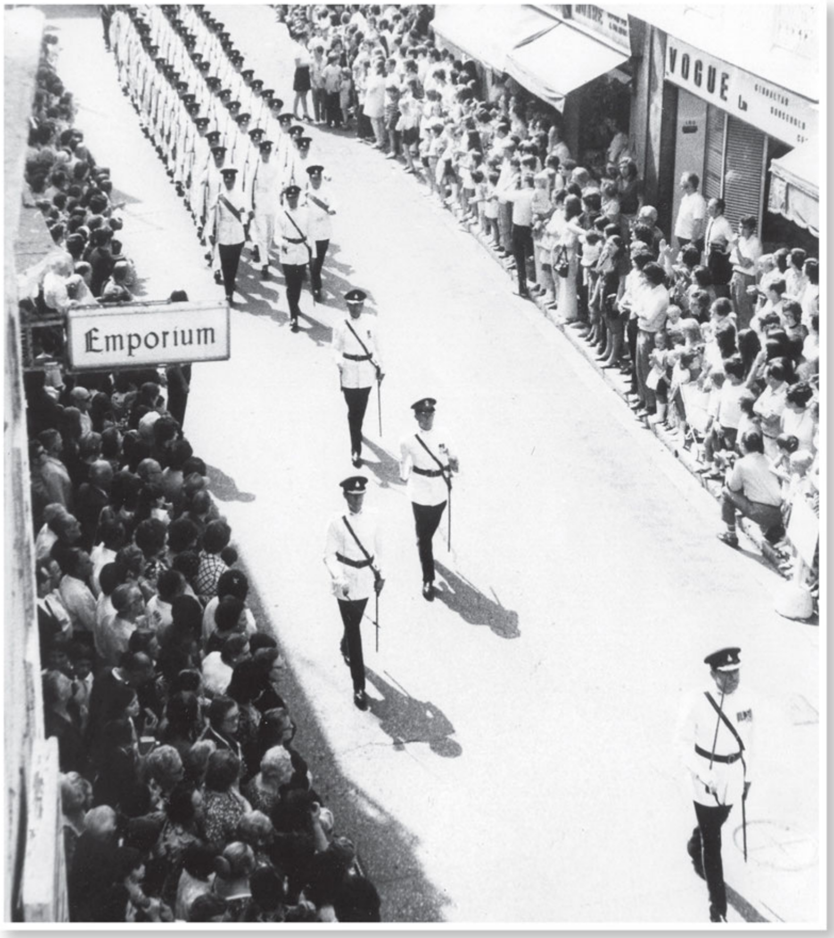


Governor Admiral Sir Varyl Cargill Begg presents the first Colours to the Regiment on 25 September 1971. The Colours are carried by Lieutenant William Jardin.

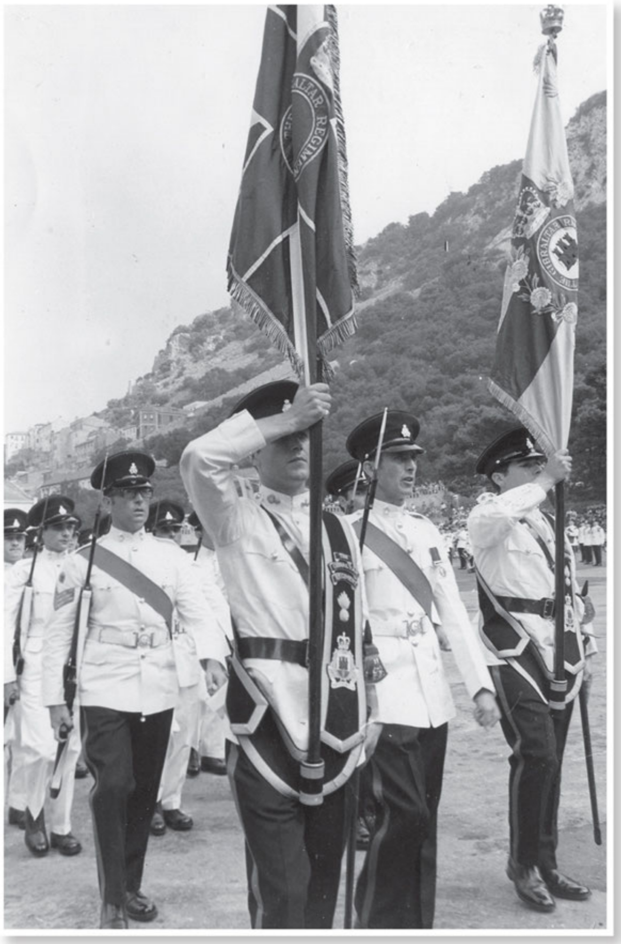

QUEENS CINEMA

The Regiment marching past the Governor Admiral Sir Varyl Begg in quick march.

The Regiment proudly displaying the newly awarded Colours at Grand Parade.


Emporium
VOGUE

The new Colours are presented to the population of GIbraltar during a march down Main Street.



The new Colours.

As in any parade involving a presentation of Colours or a Trooping of the Colours, the escort guard had the most involved part to play. This guard was, therefore, made up of the 40th intake personnel and members of the permanent staff who were able to rehearse on their own during the day; in addition rehearsals were held in the evening twice a week. It was an important formation period when the whole Regiment came together for each rehearsal, working towards the same aim as opposed to sub-unit training, and as a result regimental pride was further enhanced.

The rehearsals started at 2000 hrs and ended at midnight and followed a fairly hectic schedule. The men would arrive at Buena Vista, draw weapons, check in and then transport to Lathbury. At Lathbury there would usually be some ‘warm up’ drill and drill practice by each guard before the rehearsals of the parade sequences began on the floodlit square. The groups would then return to Buena Vista where, once the usual admin was over, many would relax for a while in the All Ranks Club, ‘The Grenadier’. At this point groups would revert to their sub-units and the usual banter would resume between the gunners, infantry and air defence.

The parade took place on 25 September 1971 at Grand Parade, starting at 1100 hrs. It was commanded by the Commanding Officer Lieutenant-Colonel Porral with Major Ferrary as Second-in-Command. It was a proud day for the Regiment and an equally proud day for the Gibraltarians who attended the parade in their thousands and were later to throng to Main Street to watch their Regiment march past with its new Colours.

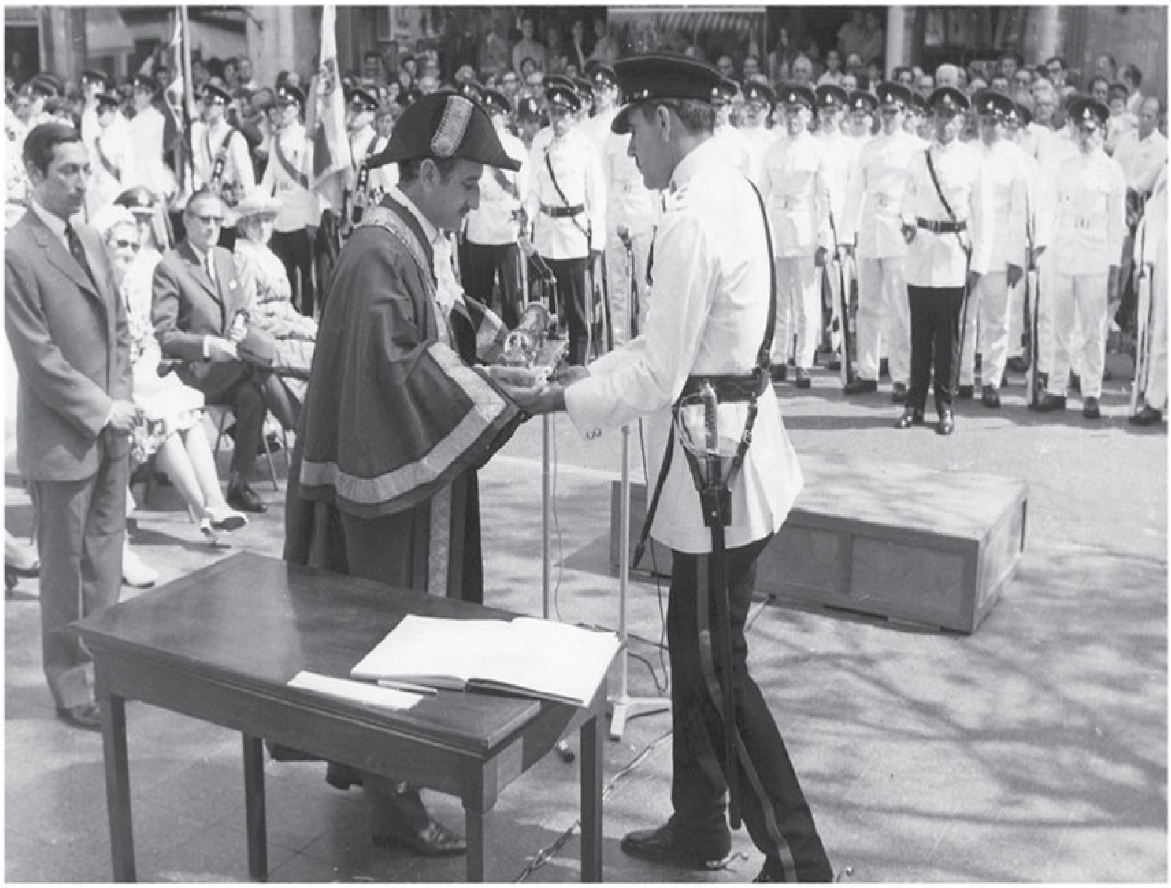
The Gibraltar government accorded its own highest honour on the Regiment on 22 July 1971 at a meeting of the House of Assembly when a motion was unanimously passed conferring the Honorary Freedom of the City on the Gibraltar Regiment. The Second Chief Minister Robert Peliza proposed the motion and during his speech he spoke of the constant wish by the people of Gibraltar, through the ages, to contribute towards the defence of their home town, mentioning the Genoese Guard and the voluntary formation of the Gibraltar Volunteer Corps in 1915. He spoke of the overwhelming result of the referendum and the other impulsive attempt there had been in 1900 to also form a corps. He ended his speech by extolling that the determination to defend their home was certainly no less now, with the volunteers coming forward for the ‘New Regiment’. In his reply, seconding the motion, the leader of the opposition, Sir Joshua Hassan, pointed out that the Chief Minister had not mentioned his role as a member of the Gibraltar Defence Force, retiring as a major, and that he, himself, had served as a gunner in the same force and, therefore, had an interest in the Gibraltar Regiment as successor to the GDF. The presentation was to take place on the day of the presentation of the Colours, at a short ceremony outside the House of Assembly.

On the auspicious day, the parade marched onto the square and awaited the arrival of the dignitaries and finally the Governor Admiral Sir Varyl Begg. Following the royal salute and inspection by the Governor the troops formed a hollow square, after which the Colours were blessed and then handed over to the two ensigns. There then followed the first ever troop of the Colours through the ranks, followed by a march past in slow and quick time. The old comrades also took part in the parade, marching on to the parade ground to be inspected by the Governor. The parade then marched through the city halting outside the House of Assembly for the official granting of the Freedom of the City, before resuming the march through the city to Water Port where the parade fell out.

The Freedom of the City

The Freedom of the City is an honour that dates back to antiquity: in ancient Rome the boundaries of city were regarded as sacred and military formations were forbidden to enter it while under arms. Similar laws existed in other European cities throughout the Middle Ages in order to protect the public and its civic rights. The Freedom of the City – the right to enter a city without relinquishing the military character of the military formations and the individual soldiers – was an honour granted only to troops who had earned the trust of the local populace, either through some valiant action or simply by being a familiar presence. Today, the Freedom of the City is an entirely ceremonial honour, usually granted to a unit with historic ties to a specific area, as a token of appreciation for their long and dedicated service.

Emporium



The Commanding Officer receives the casket containing the Deed of Grant of Freedom of the City of Gibraltar. It was mounted on a piece of stalactite from St Michael's Cave.

The Commanding Officer of the Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Porral, is granted the Freedom of the City by the Mayor of Gibraltar, the Hon. Alfred J. Vasquez.

During the ceremony the Governor congratulated the Regiment and said:

I trust that the Colours I have presented this morning will not only establish your identity in the British Army, but will also serve as a rallying point in Gibraltar for those who hold that the ancient virtues of loyalty, integrity, discipline and service to the community are still as vital in a modern society, if that society wishes to preserve its free and democratic institutions. I wish all good fortune to the Gibraltar Regiment and those who serve in it.

Addressing the Governor the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel J. Porral, replied:

We are a young Regiment, young in age and I think young in spirit. We are unable to claim the battle experience of other units of the Army, and so our new Colours are bare of Battle Honours. We are conscious however, of the fact that our Rock is steeped in history and traditions, closely interwoven with the history of the Armed Forces during the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and that a great many heroic deeds have taken place on this soil and on the waters around it. We are proud and humble, at the same time for the great Honour Her Majesty has bestowed on this Regiment, in allowing us to bear our first Colours, and we are grateful to you Sir, for coming here to present them to us, and for your kind words.

Shortly after the parade, on 7 October 1971, the 40th and last National Service intake was disembodied. They had done sterling work in providing the bulk of No 1 Guard for the Colours parade and had also trained hard to gain proficiency on the anti-aircraft guns and in infantry skills.

LIFE AND ROUTINE ON THE ROCK, 1970–82

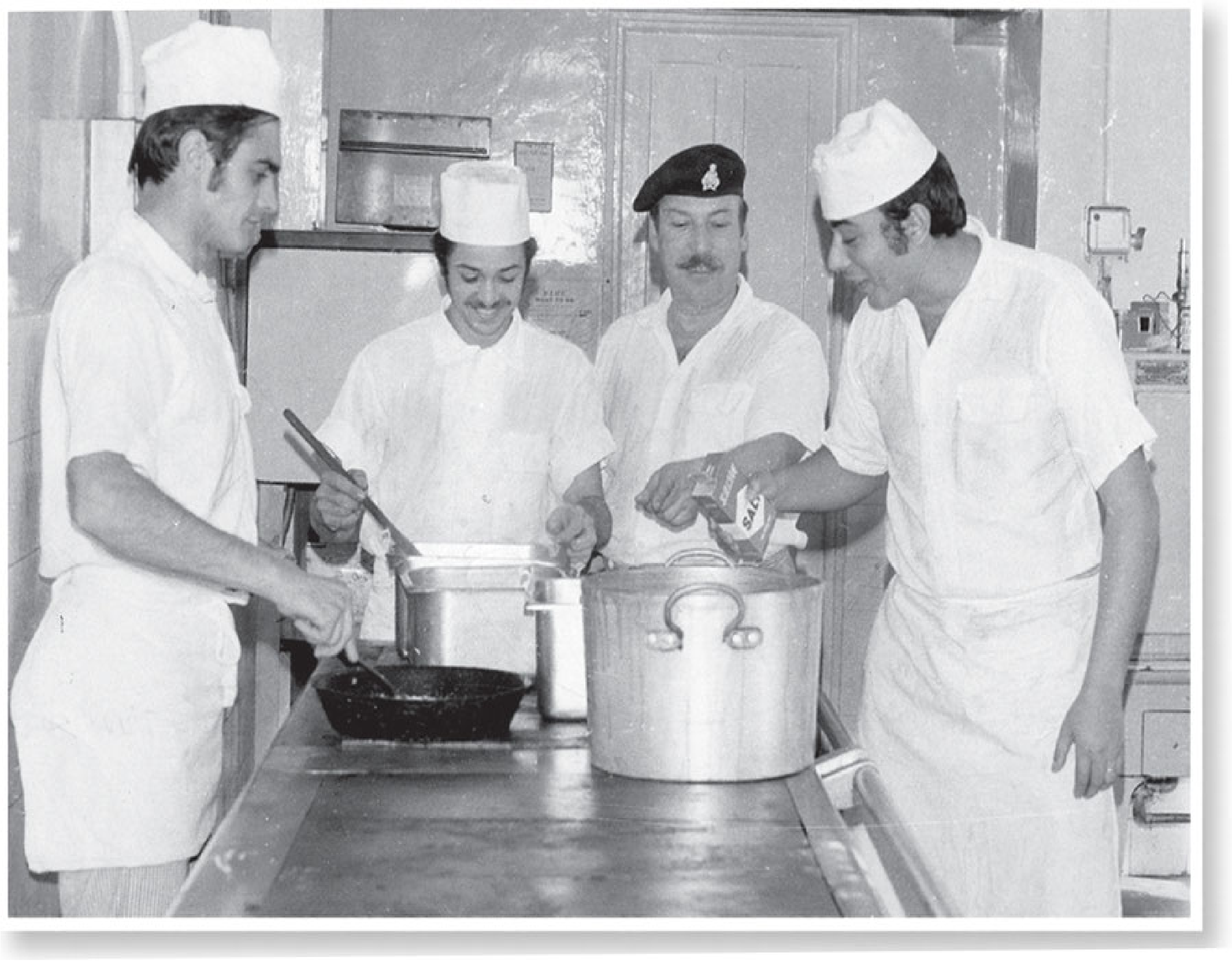
In August 1970, an affiliation was approved between 19 (Gibraltar 1779–1783) Battery Royal Artillery, 39 Missile Battery Royal Artillery and the Gunner Troop of the Gibraltar Regiment. This affiliation marked an appropriate association between the senior battery of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, which spent 40 years of its early history in Gibraltar, including during the period of the Great Siege from which its honour title was derived, and the gunners' sub-unit of the Gibraltar Regiment. The affiliation was to come into effect on 13 September, the anniversary of the repulse of the great attack on the Fortress in 1782, when the Royal Artillery played a decisive role in the defence of the Rock. More gunners' affiliations were created later. On 8 September 1972 the affiliation between the Regiment's Gunner Battery and 21 (Gibraltar 1779–1783) Battery Royal Artillery became effective.

Throughout 1972, the routine of weekly training sessions on Thursday evenings and weekend training once a month was working well with an encouraging high attendance rate from the volunteers. It was fast becoming a part of everyday life with each of the new Territorial Army members. The permanent staff continued with their training and support role, and also adjusted well to the changes involved.

Food: a motivating factor

George Mascarenhas, a member of the last national service intake of 1971 remembers:

... our cook (I can’t recall his rank) Jimmy Fletcher was the best. His ‘torta de patata’ was the best I have eaten, and generally we were fed very, very well. Those cooked breakfasts at 05.30 in the morning are a distant but vivid memory, in fact, the quality of our food would be the envy of many hotels today. We had tea with cake or sandwiches during a welcome mid-morning break in training. I don’t know what the budget was for food but it seemed we had no restriction whatsoever. I would certainly do another four months if the food was the same again…



The chefs in 1976, Jimmy Fletcher second from right ... and chef Michael Tierney in 2014.

The Chief Minister, Sir Joshua Hassan, visiting the Regiment while it is training on the radio sets, 1972. The Chief Minister is wearing his regimental tie.

In May 1973 the Chief Minister Sir Joshua Hassan gave a report on the activities of the Regiment after its first year as a voluntary unit, and looking forward to the completion of its second year in July. He reported on the change of command and the good attendance figures throughout all the sub-units. Further to the camps, and the weekly and weekend exercises, the Regiment had also taken part in local air defence and command post exercises, as part of its integration into the Gibraltar Defence plan. On the ceremonial side, a Ceremony of the Keys had been performed, the Port Sergeant had been provided by the unit for the first time and the right to march through the city with Colours flying and bayonets fixed had been exercised as part of a Regimental Day Parade. The Regimental Association had met twice, including a visit to the Regiment and was exploring the possibility of bringing together past and present members whenever possible. A pay, pensions and gratuities increase had come through for the permanent staff and a new establishment table had been published to cater for the needs of the establishment. He mentioned that the possibility of establishing a Corps of Drums was being studied and a Cadet detachment was being considered. Finally he commented on his recent visit to the Regiment and how he had been greatly impressed by the standards being achieved and the enthusiasm of those whom he had met.

Admiral of the Fleet Sir Varyl Begg, who had been Governor of Gibraltar throughout the height of the problems with Spain and the major changes the Regiment had experienced after the abolition of conscription, completed his tour of duty on 10 September 1973. The Regiment provided a guard of honour with the Colours in front of the Convent composed of a mix of regular and Territorial members of the Regiment. Rehearsals for this parade had started after the summer recess which, as far as Territorial Army training was concerned, was always observed during the hot months.

Port Sergeant

Whenever His Excellency the Governor hosts an official banquet for honoured guests, the Port Sergeant will march into the dining hall in slow time preceded by a single drummer. He reports to the Governor: 'Your Excellency, the fortress is secure and all's well!'

The keys are handed over to the Governor who places them on a cushion in front of him for the remainder of the night. Before retiring, the Port Sergeant salutes His Excellency the Governor and bids 'Good night Sir', to which His Excellency replies 'Good night Port Sergeant, carry on'. The Port Sergeant and the drummer then march out in quick time.

Since the capture of the Rock in 1704, the keys of Gibraltar, which opened the sea and land gates of the Fortress, have symbolized the possession of the Fortress by Great Britain. The keys have come to be regarded as the seal of office of His Excellency the Governor of Gibraltar and as such are handed over from one Governor to the next.

During the Great Siege (1779–83), the Governor, General George Augustus Elliot, the first Baron Heathfield, constantly wore the keys at his belt, except when he handed them to a sergeant who held the appointment of Port Sergeant. As the sunset gun was fired, the Port Sergeant, accompanied by an armed escort, would proceed to lock the gates to the Fortress for the night. The keys would then be returned to the Governor for safekeeping. Legend has it that General Elliot slept with the keys to the Fortress under his pillow. The following morning, the Port Sergeant would again collect the keys, reopen the gates and hand back the keys to the Governor.

After peace was restored in 1783, drums and fifes accompanied the Port Sergeant and his escort, warning aliens to leave the Rock before the gates were closed for the night. This procedure was carried out each evening without interruption for approximately 140 years. However, it was discontinued some time after the First World War. The event was revived in 1933 and it is still carried out today in the format known as the Ceremony of the Keys. This ceremony is held several times a year at the Grand Casemates Square. There, the re-enacting of the firing of the sunset gun, the posting of an outpost platoon and the locking up of the gates is carried out ceremonially in the presence of His Excellency the Governor for the benefit of all visitors to the Rock.

Since 1978 and at the instigation of the then Governor, General Sir William Jackson, the post of Port Sergeant has always been held by a member of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment. The Port Sergeant is always in attendance to His Excellency the Governor when he is carrying out an official ceremonial function. The appointment of Port Sergeant is carried out by regular senior non-commissioned officers in the Regiment between the ranks of sergeant and warrant officer class 2.

Colour Sergeant M. Hitchcock (First Reserve Port Sergeant) handing the keys to the Governor. The Chief Minister is sitting beyond the stage. Lieutenant Colonel Lopez stands before the stage.

A further parade was to follow shortly after this one, on 15 September. This was to be a Regimental Day Parade during which the battery was to be named ‘Thomson’s Battery’. The naming was in honour of the memory of Sir William Thomson OBE JP who had been the first local commander of the Anti-Aircraft Section and then that of the Heavy Air Defence Battery of the Gibraltar Defence Force during the war, and who had subsequently become the first Honorary Colonel of the Regiment. The single surviving member of the Gibraltar Volunteer Corps, Mr Ferdinand Ruggeri, and members of the Gibraltar Defence Force were invited to attend. The salute was taken by the Acting Governor the Hon E. H. Davis CMG OBE, making this the first time that a military parade was to have been reviewed by a civilian Governor. The parade, held at Grand Parade, consisted of a guard escorting the Queen's and Regimental Colours. On parade were four 25-pounder guns on the Battery establishment as saluting guns and which at the appropriate time on the parade, had the new Thomson's Battery crest displayed, which was a trident backed by the Royal Artillery colours. Following the naming of the battery the Regiment exercised its right to march through the city with Colours flying and bayonets fixed. It is interesting to note that the Colours of the Royal Artillery are its guns, but the Gibraltar Regiment, at the time, was an infantry unit manning guns and bearing infantry Colours.

Saltie the Pig

In 1975 Gibraltar and the Regiment acquired a new friend: Saltie the pig. Saltie had been sighted on Governor's Beach – a beach which was virtually inaccessible from land. It was assumed that it must have swum ashore after either falling or having being thrown overboard from a passing ship. In the days of the closed frontier events like this could create rather more interest than might be expected. The exploits of the pig – nicknamed Salty by the Gibraltar Chronicle but renamed Saltie after her sex was ascertained – captured the imagination of the town to the extent that a public fund was started for her welfare.

One day the intrepid chef of the Regiment, Sergeant J. Fletcher, was out fishing with two other friends and found himself off Governor's Beach. The pig was spotted on the beach and the valiant team went in to capture it. These 'three men in a boat' were in for the mother of all battles. Saltie put up a valiant fight which lasted several hours. The raiders could not pin her down, but despite the level of intelligence pigs are known to have, the group was composed of superior tacticians. They eventually managed to force her into the water by blocking her escape

routes with some derelict oil barrels found on the beach. Once she was in the water and unable to butt and push, they deployed their net, which was substantially stronger than a fishing net needed to be, and Saltie was hoisted aboard and her legs were tied up. Phase two was landing her at Eastern Beach. People in the area could not believe their eyes! Saltie was soon on her way to Buena Vista and had a starring role in the next Regimental Open Day. In a specially constructed enclosure well away from the field kitchen, Saltie ambled about amusing the thousands who came to see her. The public were invited to estimate her weight: the competition raised £48.26 which was made up to £60 from regimental funds and presented to the Gibraltar Society for the Prevention of Blindness. Saltie was weighed after a great deal of sweat on the part of Sergeant J. Fletcher, Corporal R. Walker and Mohamed, the Moroccan cleaner. She tipped the scales at exactly 200 lb.

The revenge of the Spanish mortar shell

A somewhat embarrassing but, with hindsight, quite funny incident occurred at Regimental Headquarters in the summer of 1974. The layout of the headquarters consisted of the chief clerk's office, the orderly room, typing pool (one man, Lance Corporal Edwin Reyes), library and reception all on the ground floor. Stairs led up to the Commanding Officer's office, that of the Second-in-Command and the Adjutant. On a window sill, halfway up the stairs by a large wooden sash window, stood, in all its majesty, a Spanish 18th-century 13-inch mortar shell.

The Adjutant called one of the clerks who promptly made his way up the stairway, only to realize he was still holding the lit pipe he had been smoking. Taught to think quickly, he tapped the pipe tobacco into the fuse hole on top of the shell and continued up the stairs. Whilst he was receiving his instructions in the upstairs office all hell broke loose. An incredibly loud whooshing sound filled the building, making it impossible to hear anyone speak. This was quickly followed by dense

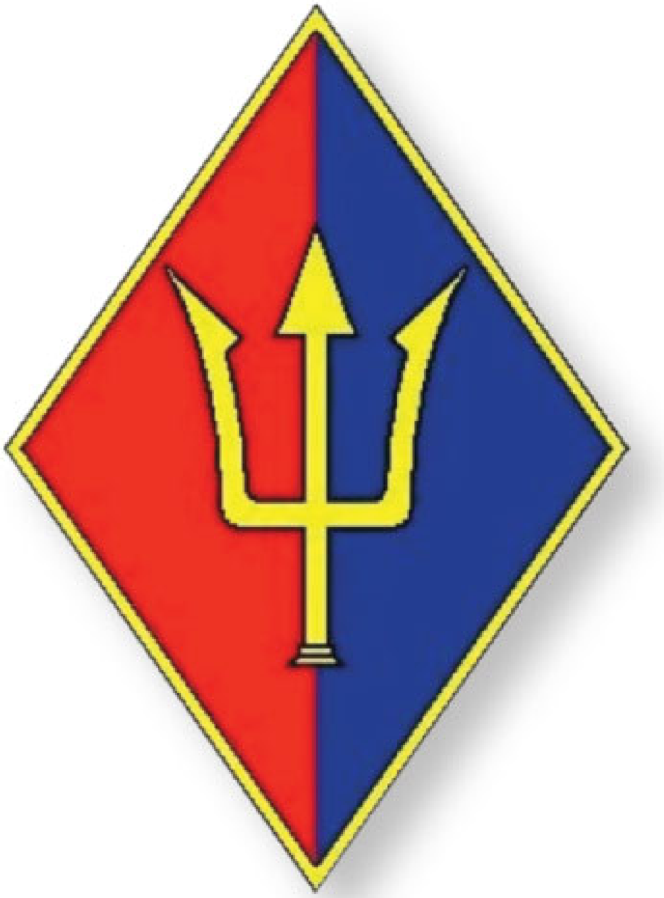
black smoke, which was projected towards the top floors, apparently under great pressure, while the residue began to rain onto the lower offices. There was no way anyone could use the stairs in either direction. Everyone on the top floor was forced to exit the building through the window of the Adjutant's office which was above the front door porch and provided the best escape route.

Warrant Officer Class 2 R. Randall, the chief clerk, whose office was on the first floor, was the first to come to his senses. Through the gloom, he managed to get the fire hose pointing at the shell and eventually into the fuse hole, to extinguish the conflagration. The shell eventually cooled down, thwarted in its delayed attempt to strike at the heart of the Regiment!

It transpired that when the shell had been rendered safe before being presented to the Regiment some black powder had obviously been missed. Once ignition took place, the large fuse hole had allowed the pressure to escape, but the mess took weeks to clear, almost as long as the dented pride of the pipe-smoking junior non-commissioned officer, Lance Corporal 'Shooty' Sanchez.

In time the only guns to be held would be saluting guns which, as part of the regimental history, form a tangible link with the unit's origins as part of the Royal Artillery.

Following the naming of Thomson's Battery, and the adoption of the trident as the plaque to be displayed on the guns, the Acting Governor Mr Davis presented the Regiment with a silver trident at the Officers' Mess. On receiving the trident the Commanding Officer thanked Mr Davis and then explained the significance of the trident. The centre prong represented the Regiment's Infantry Company and the prongs on either side were the Heavy Troop and the Air Defence Troop of Thomson's Battery. The staff supporting the prongs symbolized the permanent cadre. The base supporting the trident had been sculptured from limestone taken from Napier Battery, the first operational battery manned by the Gibraltar Defence Force during the war, so this particular presentation has immense significance for the Regiment.

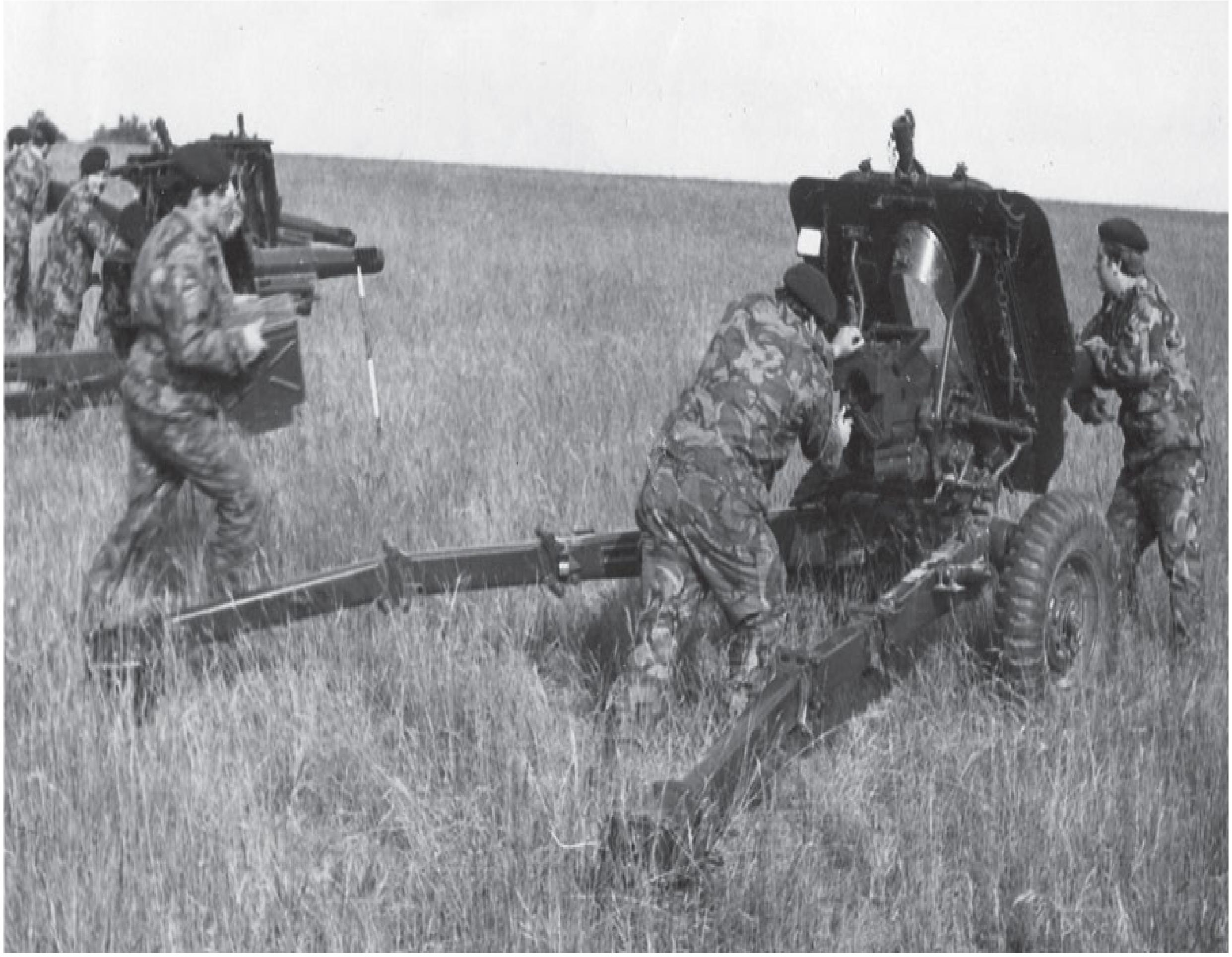


The Thomson's Battery crest, a trident backed by the Royal Artillery colours.

A major change in the establishment of the Regiment took place in April 1975. The post of Regimental Sergeant Major, which had been filled since its inception in 1956 by an attached warrant officer class 1 from an infantry battalion, became a regular post within the Regiment which would be filled by a Gibraltar Regiment cap-badged senior warrant officer. The first to be appointed to this post was Warrant Officer Class 2 R. Randall who was duly promoted to warrant officer class 1 and took over from Warrant Officer

Class 1 T. Finn who had been on attachment from the Royal Anglian Regiment. Mr Randall had completed his National Service with the 16th intake of the Gibraltar Defence Force in 1954 and joined as a regular after completing his first obligatory camp. He was trained as an instructor on the 40mm Bofors and 3.7-inch anti-aircraft guns. In 1959 he was promoted to sergeant after having re-roled as an infantry instructor. He became chief clerk in 1969, and after serving as RSM, was later to be commissioned in the post of Quartermaster in 1981. He left the Regiment in 1986 having been made an MBE shortly before his retirement.

Live firing exercise, UK, 1977



Bringing the guns into position.

Loading the gun.

Ready to fire. Live firing in the UK, 1977.

The participants of the UK camp live firing exercise, 1977.

This appointment of RSM was a great step forward in the evolution of the Regiment and a strong boost for morale. Without decrying the excellent work and interest in the Regiment that all previous attached RSMs had shown, it was opportune that this appointment should have been localized when the time was right. It also opened up another step in the promotion ladder within a regular establishment which was still small, and as a result, restrictive in career structure.

In late July 1975 Mr Emilio Alvarez died suddenly at the age of 59. Mr Alvarez was the first man to have enlisted into the Gibraltar Defence Force when it was formed at the outbreak of the Second World War and had later worked for Sir William Thomson, late Mayor of Gibraltar. In the same month the Commanding Officer Lieutenant-Colonel A. J. Ferrary retired and Lieutenant-Colonel D. L. Collado assumed command. He was the first regular officer to command since Lieutenant-Colonel C. A. Norton had retired in 1965. A month later Lieutenant-Colonel J. M. E. Gareze was appointed Honorary Colonel of the Regiment succeeding Lieutenant-Colonel C. A. Norton who had held the post of Honorary Colonel for seven years. Also in June Second Lieutenant Duarte, the first regular officer to be gazetted for some time, joined the Regiment. He had joined Sandhurst at the beginning of the year and was commissioned on 27 June, then remained to complete a regular careers course.

Two 105mm pack howitzer (PH) guns arrived in Gibraltar on 10 December 1975. They were to be used in the conversion training of the Heavy Troop, which would be changing from the 9.2-inch guns to the 105 PH. Some days later an instructional team arrived on the Rock, with the aim of initiating the conversion training. They were followed in early January by Master Gunner Warrant Officer Class 1 Marsh who was attached to the Regiment for a month to support the training. Staff Sergeant E. Vincent, Sergeant J. Sanders and Lance Corporal G. Stone assisted in the training and, at the same time, were also working on the ongoing programme so that they could continue the troop conversion once the Royal Artillery training team left.

The penultimate camp for the year was held in October and consisted of just one officer, two senior non-commissioned officers, six junior non-commissioned officers and 11 privates. The last one in November would only consist of 16 men. It was a good indication that the bulk of the men were attending the UK camps and that only those who, for work or personal reasons, could not do so were coming to the local camp. During this camp a 40mm L/70 shoot took place from Brewery Crusher Range. This seaward shoot involved engaging static targets which were deployed at different angles and ranges within the arc of fire. It served its purpose in terms of practising gun drill with live ammunition and also provided practice for the gun layers but, again, it was in the UK that the real benefits were gained.

It was also in November that the Field Troop fired their 105s for the first time from Brewery Crusher. There was always local interest in shoots from this location – the public were able to get a grandstand view from the road directly behind the guns or from either flank.

An extra camp, for the specific purpose of training a new batch of recruits, was embodied at the end of November. TA recruits – who only had the benefit of a 14-day in-camp training period – would attend a camp where they would be trained in drill and rifle drill and on the self-loading rifle and general purpose machine gun. They also trained in fieldcraft, basic map reading and first aid and were subjected to a rigorous but progressive physical training programme. At the end of the camp they would take part in a small parade at Buena Vista Barracks where they would 'March off the Square'. After this they would continue training separately in evening and weekend training sessions for a period of six months, after which they became trained soldiers and would join a sub-unit. This would normally be at the time of the UK camps so that in their first camp during the new training year, they would specialize on a branch of gunnery or as an infantry soldier with the company.

The new set-up in the Regiment since the move from conscription to a Territorial Army classification had gone well, but it had been a period of great change in many respects, ranging from the status of the unit to some of the weaponry and equipment used. The training had now developed into a scheme where all the basic training was carried out in Gibraltar during evening and weekend sessions, and then put into practice during local exercises. There were, of course, aspects of training which could not effectively be practised in Gibraltar, which is when the UK exercises came into their own. Both the Field Troop with their PH 105s and the Air Defence Troop with the 40mm L/70s could practise their operational role in Gibraltar and could train on their equipment and small arms carrying out limited shoots from Brewery Crusher Range. However, the opportunity to deploy to the training areas in UK and to fire on field ranges was always a highlight, and served to hone the men's skills to a much higher degree. It was obvious that the Regiment was keeping very busy. This was particularly impressive considering the small size of the unit and the large ratio of volunteer reservists, who were dependent on their employers to make time available. The employers had cooperated when the new Regiment was formed, and on the whole, were wholeheartedly maintaining their support.

Apart from the tactical training, the list of ceremonials occurring annually in Gibraltar increased in the late 1970s and the Regiment was virtually always involved in one way or another. These events demanded the full attention of the Regiment. Just one example of the work and time required was the departure of the Governor, Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Sir John Grandy GCB, KBE, DSO and the arrival of the new Governor General Sir William Jackson GBE, KCB, MC in 1978. Before his departure, the outgoing Governor had expressed a wish that a Ceremony of the Keys, scheduled for two weeks before his departure date, should be performed by the Regiment. This went ahead on 13 April after which Sir John Grandy was dined out at the Officers' Mess. On the date of his departure the Regiment provided a guard of honour outside the Convent. The guard was commanded by Captain H. Alvarez with Lieutenant C. A. Armstrong as the Second-in-Command. The Queen's Colour was carried by Lieutenant G. Valarino and the Regimental Colour by Lieutenant D. Duarte. Led by the Corps of Drums, the parade marched down to a packed Convent Square where the Governor took the salute. As part of the departure ceremony, later in the morning, a 19-gun salute was fired from Devil's Gap Saluting Battery by a gun detachment from the Regiment. This was done as HMS London – which was conveying Sir John and Lady Grandy to the UK – passed abreast of Coaling Island. The detachment was commanded by Captain S. Levy, who by now was well on the way to holding a record, impossible to defeat, for the number of gun salutes fired.

On the arrival of the new Governor in HMS Apollo some weeks later the Regiment fired a 17-round gun salute as the warship came alongside and a further 17-round gun salute after the Governor had been sworn in at the House of Assembly. The unit also provided a quarter guard on the ground outside the House.

The new Governor was soon to pay an extensive visit to the Regiment. After inspecting a barrack guard commanded by Staff Sergeant Louis Lopez there followed a discussion with the Commanding Officer in the CO's office after which all areas of the barracks were toured. This was followed by tours of O'Hara's Battery, the Ape's Den and Devil's Gap Battery. During the discussion with the CO the Governor intimated that he would like the post of Port Sergeant to be taken over by the Regiment on a permanent basis. As the tour of barracks progressed His Excellency and the CO were met at each location by a senior non-commissioned officer responsible. When it was Sergeant Joe Sanders’ turn, he completed his introduction to the area, answered various questions, and then waited for the visitors to move away. They both stopped to talk a little distance away and it gradually became obvious to Sanders that he was the subject of their conversation. Mild panic began to set in. But then all was revealed when they returned to him and the Commanding Officer casually announced, ‘Congratulations Port Sergeant, come and see me in my office at 1200’.

Ceremonials continued to be a way of life in Gibraltar, much as it had been for centuries. In any given year about six Ceremonies of the Keys would be performed, ten to 12 ceremonial guard mounts, the Queen’s Birthday Parade, Remembrance Sunday, guards of honour for visiting VIPs and various other parades. It is fair to say that many were taken by the resident battalion but the Regiment also had a considerable share. Because of this it was required that a pool of ‘man training days’ was to be made available to the unit for ceremonial purposes. Each volunteer had to complete an annual allocation of training days specifically for normal training and it goes to their credit that there was never a problem, despite the extra hours done, in men not turning up for tactical or ceremonial training because they had done their required quota on either.

YEARS OF CHANGE

THE FALKLANDS WAR, 1982

In the aftermath of the Falklands War in 1982, the Ministry of Defence took steps to improve Gibraltar's defences, by providing a deterrent through improved equipment for forces permanently stationed in Gibraltar. The Cold War had very much focussed the attention of the British Army and the British government on the inner-German border and a possible conflict with the Warsaw Pact. As a consequence, threats to overseas territories such as the Falklands or Gibraltar had been neglected and had been regarded as being of secondary importance – hence the previous changes to the defence structure in Gibraltar. The Falklands War shifted some of the overall attention away from the threat of the Cold War turning hot and towards the dangers and threats that the British overseas territories were facing. The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Britto, remembered that up to that point 'The Regiment had always been asking for improvements in equipment and status. This had always been the case. It was very much like Gibraltar and the common market, we had all the minuses and none of the pluses. Suddenly the climate changed and whereas before we had asked without result now everything was coming our way.' Perhaps even more to the point he said that 'before the Falklands, the Regiment had four Landrovers and a donkey, afterward the war it was a fully equipped unit'.

One of the areas which needed consideration was Gibraltar's air defence capability. At the time the sole air defence assets on the Rock consisted of the Regiment's Air Defence Troop, manned by regular and TA members, and equipped with the 40mm L/70 guns. The most suitable blueprint to address the issue was found within the UK's Territorial Army Volunteer Reserves which had four air defence regiments equipped with a first-generation shoulder-launched 'Blowpipe' low-level air-defence weapon system. In the autumn of 1982 it was decided that the Gibraltar Regiment's Air Defence Troop was to be equipped with the Blowpipe resulting in a flurry of activity at Buena Vista Barracks. Arrangements were quickly made for training staff from the Royal School of Artillery, Air Defence Wing, to come out to Gibraltar during the first quarter of 1983 to commence the conversion training. Shortly afterwards Captain William Jardim was appointed troop commander and Staff Sergeant James Ferro was appointed troop sergeant major. Both attended a technical and tactical course at the RSA at the end of which they joined up with the troop, which had travelled to UK to attend the final week of the Blowpipe conversion course at RSA Larkhill. This was followed by a week's training at the RA ranges at Manorbier on the west coast of South Wales. A total of 46 missiles was allocated to the troop for its first live practice, which meant that each student who had successfully completed the operator's course had the opportunity to fire at least one missile.

The introduction of the Blowpipe was not without difficulty as Lieutenant-Colonel Britto remembers:

We had problems when we changed from the 40/70 to Blowpipe. A lecture room was set aside for the simulators and the air-defence troop spent hours in there. We had a target date to meet; the battery met the date, but the air-defence troop had to successfully fire live missiles in Manorbier before they could be considered operational. This was arranged and I went over as CO to visit the camp. We had major problems. The missiles were going over the cliff edge of the Manorbier firing point and straight into the sea. This continued throughout all the firing. The problem was compounded when targeting aircraft became scarce. This was in February and we had a deadline to meet by the end of March. It became clear that we were not going to make it; the missiles would just not stay in the air long enough. We tried everything, at one point we had the Spearhead Battalion deployed so that they could fire flares for us to use as targets. They had been somewhere in the Midlands and travelled overnight to get to us … they were not too pleased! We were issued extra missiles, but the problem persisted. At this point I made a stand. I said I was not prepared to accept that the men were to blame; there had to be another explanation. I had seen their training and I knew they had a 90 per cent kill rate and it was not possible that they should now be right down to virtually 1 per cent. It had got to the stage that we had even investigated the possibility of Russian trawlers interfering with the frequencies.

An engineer from Short Brothers, the Blowpipe manufacturers, came to join us, he could not sort the problem and another engineer joined him. They carried out diagnostic test on the equipment and this led to an investigation at the end of which it was then established that the material had been faulty and that the men from the air-defence troop had not done anything wrong. A few months later the troop returned to the camp. It was issued with new Blowpipes that worked perfectly and the troops passed the test with flying colours.

At the same time as the Air Defence Troop upgraded, the Field Troop was to become a Field Battery. The changes involved a change of equipment from three 105mm pack howitzers to six 105 mm light guns. The Air Defence Troop which until then had been part of Thomson's Battery together with the Field Troop then assumed a separate identity. Major Arthur Rugeroni became the first Battery Commander with Captain Dennis Duarte as BK and Warrant Officer Class 2 Eddie Vincent as Battery Sergeant Major. A series of conversion courses were undertaken and by early April 1983 the unit was fully operational on the equipment. At the end of the same month a parade was held at the Naval Grounds where the Regiment bade farewell to the pack howitzers and welcomed in the new light guns and gave the population of Gibraltar an opportunity to see the new equipment.

The Blowpipe

The Blowpipe is a man-portable surface-to-air missile which came into use with the British Army and Royal Marines in 1975. Manufactured by

Short Brothers of Belfast and utilizing a command to line-of-sight guidance mode, Blowpipe could be brought into action very quickly and was capable of being operated from a wide variety of positions. Typical 'into action' time was 20 seconds. It required no external power supply and consisted of a saddle-shaped aiming unit and canister missile, which when clipped together, formed a complete weapon system ready to fire. To reduce the overall size of the container, the rear fins of the missile were stored in the larger diameter cylinder at the front of the tube (which also contained the antenna for transmitting guidance signals); during firing the fins slipped onto the rear of the missile as it flew through and were held there by heat-activated adhesive tapes. This gave the launch container a unique shape, seemingly oversized at the front and extremely thin at the rear. The operator had to steer the missile all the way to its target manually via a small thumb joystick. The Blowpipe operator had about 20 seconds to spot the target, align the unit and fire. One British officer described using the weapon as comparable to 'trying to shoot pheasants with a drainpipe.'

The official report from the Falklands War stated that of the 95 missiles fired by the British, only nine managed to destroy their targets and all of these were slow-flying planes and helicopters. Blowpipe was found to be particularly ineffective when used to engage a crossing target or to chase a target moving rapidly away from the operator. The poor performance led to it being withdrawn from UK service. Blowpipe was replaced by the Javelin surface-to-air missile, which was of a generally similar design but improved performance.

Blowpipe guarding the Rock.

Resulting from the changes to the Air Defence and Field Battery fighting equipment there was a large increase in the Regiment's vehicle establishment, which was brought up to over 35 vehicles. At the same time all the signals equipment was upgraded to the new Clansman range which replaced their Larkspur radios. The Clansman range was a vast improvement on the previous equipment. They were considerably lighter and more reliable and were digitally synthesized which enabled them to switch channels without requiring to be tuned. All things considered the unit emerged from the changes fighting fit and with a clearer aim and purpose for their existence.

THE LIBYA CRISIS, 1986

The changes and improvements mentioned above came just at the right time, as a new threat to Gibraltar was developping. On 5 April 1986 a bomb exploded in a disco in Berlin which resulted in the death of a US serviceman and the injuring of 63 others. The US government accused Libya of sponsoring the bombing, and US President Ronald Reagan ordered retaliatory strikes on Tripoli and Benghazi in Libya ten days later. This included the bombing of military barracks and airports, and also the degradation of the Libyan air defence systems. Some United States Air Force assets had used British military airports and, subsequently, the level of security in UK and in Gibraltar, the nearest British territory to Libya, was increased.

The main threat to Gibraltar was assessed to be a terrorist attack, but the possibility of an airborne attack was also considered. Libya had TU 22 aircraft which had the capability to reach and attack Gibraltar. There was doubt about the quality of their pilots and technicians to carry out a surprise attack on the Rock's airfield or other assets, but flying along the North African coastline masked by the Moroccan mountains up to the Strait of Gibraltar was considered feasible. As a consequence, no chances were taken. Initially the deployment primarily consisted of those members of the permanent cadre who had qualified as Blowpipe operators, of which there were only three at the time: Corporals Jimmy Moss, Steven Victory and Daron Davis. Three fire units were deployed, each manned by a Blowpipe operator assisted by one other member of the permanent staff. One unit was deployed at the west end of the North Mole, the other at the east end of the runway and the third below Europa Point. It was obvious that the three regular Blowpipe operators would not be able to man these sites for more than three or four days at best so a voluntary call-up of the TA men in the Air Defence Troop was initiated. As expected the response was overwhelming, and these men were soon manning the three fire units, which they did for over 70 per cent of the duration of the deployment.

Arrangements were made to fly out a Rapier missile battery to Gibraltar, but in the meantime the Air Defence Troop supplied the only air defence cover sited on the Rock. They operated with the RAF radar at ‘Rock Gun’ and a Royal Navy frigate patrolling to the east of Gibraltar, both of which would provide early warning of any imminent air attack on the Rock. Warning from the frigate would be via ship-to-shore radio. These rudimentary ‘lines of communication’ had to suffice until the arrival of the Rapier battery and the deployment of its battery command post some 48 hours later. At this stage the Regiment’s three fire units were integrated into the battery’s order of battle.

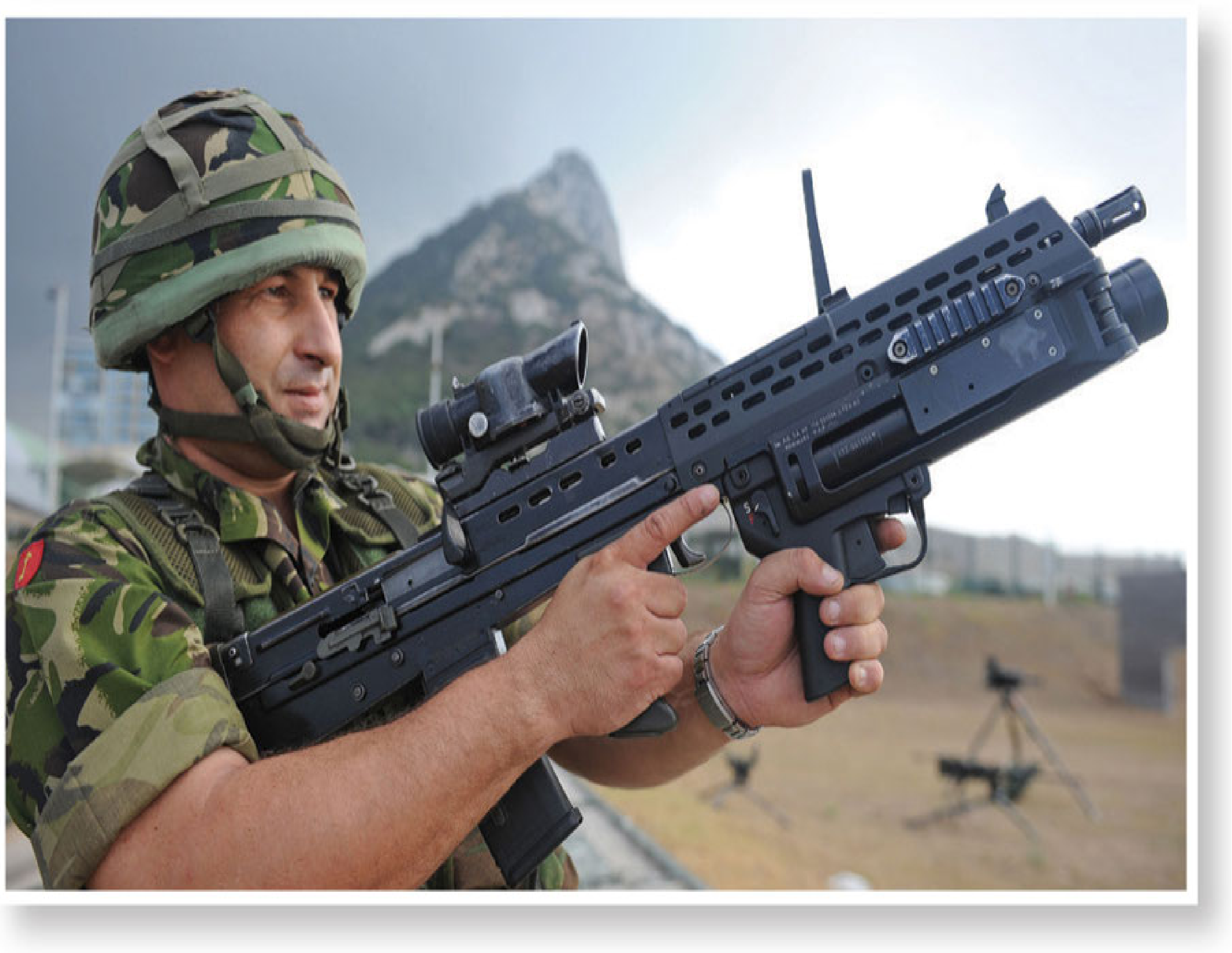
The SA80

The SA80 (Small Arms for the 1980s) is a British family of 5.56×45mm NATO small arms. The L85 rifle variant of the SA80 family has been the standard issue service rifle of the British Armed Forces since 1987. In 1994, production was officially completed. More than 350,000 L85A1 rifles and L86A1 light machine guns had been manufactured for the United Kingdom. This rifle had a mixed reputation and a number of faults became apparent soon after it had entered service. In 2000, the German company Heckler & Koch was contracted to upgrade the SA80 family of weapons. Two hundred thousand SA80s were re-manufactured, producing the A2 variant. This new version is a reliable and accurate weapon. The British Ministry of Defence describes the L85A2 as ‘modified in light of operational experience... the most reliable weapons of their type in the world’. It is due to remain in service until 2025.

Its ‘bullpup’ configuration, with the magazine behind the pistol grip, creates a short weapon that is easy to handle, in particular in close-combat situations or fighting in built-up areas. The rifle itself is not particularly light, but the small standard NATO round of 5.56mm used enables the soldier to carry plenty of ammunition. The ammunition is

carried in 30-round magazines. The rifle is accurate to a range of approximately 400 metres and it can fire single round or in automatic mode.

The rifle can be adapted to the soldiers' needs. Thus, it can be equipped with a 40mm underslung grenade launcher and enhanced optical sights.



Jonathan Sardeña with the SA80 with underslung grenade launcher.

Jaydan Attard on guard at the Devil's Tower camp carrying the SA80.

Once the Rapier battery arrived the Regiment provided the liaison officers to guide them onto the allocated fire positions. These included Devil's Gap, the runway, Windmill Hill Flats, and an area near Bleak House. The latter required a considerable amount of evacuation of army quarters and the demolition of railings and walls which were either in the line of fire or could be affected by blast effect when the missiles were fired.

Once the battery was deployed the arcs of fire of the Rapiers and Blowpipe fire units were interlocked and control was assumed through the Battery Command Post using the available Royal Navy and Royal Air Force assets. This was in effect the first post-war fully integrated and operational air defence deployment on the Rock. A direct and immediate result of this operation was the training of enough regular Blowpipe fire unit operators who would be able to man the Regiment's units at short notice.

In July 1988, the Regiment was issued with the new SA80 (Small Arms for the 1980s) rifle and the light support weapon in a phased allocation together with other units in the British Army. It was time to say goodbye to the L1A1 Self-Loading Rifle (SLR) which had been in service with the Regiment for many years. The allocation set in motion an extensive training packet which included extensive weapon training to adjust to the handling and peculiarities of the new weapon leading on to live firing. The main differences between the SA80 and the SLR were the calibre, which was 5.56mm as opposed to 7.62, the shorter overall length, slightly reduced weight and the operation of the cocking hand which was on the right side of the weapon but operated with the left hand. The men adjusted quickly to the new weapon and it was generally found to be better balanced and more accurate than the SLR.

THE END OF THE COLD WAR AND 'OPTIONS FOR CHANGE', 1989–91

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent end of the Cold War the political map changed drastically. A high-intensity conflict against a major power, i.e. the Warsaw Pact, was no longer a scenario that determined defence planning in NATO. As a consequence, Western armies underwent massive change and reform. In the British Army, the programme was called 'Options for Change' and was adopted in 1990. It resulted in a major restructuring of the British Armed Forces and among the changes implemented was a reduction of total manpower by approximately 18 per cent to around 255,000, the reduction of the army strength in Germany by 50 per cent and the amalgamation of several regiments. It was assessed that there was no direct military threat to Gibraltar – the Cold War was over and a Falklands-like invasion of Gibraltar seemed more unlikely than ever – and as a result the review was to become the most extensive and significant the

Rock had experienced for many years. Not only was the UK resident battalion to be withdrawn, but the whole of the garrison, including the three services headquarters, would be affected. The Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force were being drastically cut back and the three separate headquarters would be combined into one tri-service headquarters, to be known as Headquarters British Forces Gibraltar. It was only a question of time before the programme would also affect the Gibraltar Regiment. In 1991, the Commanding Officer Lieutenant-Colonel Eddie Guerrero was summoned to a meeting at Fortress Headquarters (FHQ). The meeting had been called to make initial plans for the withdrawal of the UK resident battalion.

The meeting centred on the security, logistical and ceremonial arrangements for the withdrawal of 1st Battalion Royal Green Jackets, which was to become the last complete British Army unit to serve in Gibraltar, severing a tradition established in 1704. The Gibraltar Regiment was tasked with assisting the withdrawal and assuming some security and ceremonial tasks. On putting some questions forward on the tasking and related time frames the Commanding Officer received the reply from the Deputy Fortress Commander (DFC): ‘Until such time as the future of your Regiment is assessed, and this is a matter that I will discuss with you after this meeting’. The bombshell had been dropped. The Regiment’s future after the withdrawal of the resident battalion was always going to provoke worry. Spain was a democracy, a member of NATO and the European Union, and it was the view of the defence analysts that Gibraltar faced no threat. Throughout the rest of the meeting the Commanding Officer wrestled with the problems he anticipated he would face in the approaching meeting with the Deputy Fortress Commander. If the Regiment was to be disbanded what would be the impact on its members and on Gibraltar as a whole? If it was to survive what would be its organization and strength? No answers to any of these questions were available at the second meeting. The Deputy Fortress Commander confessed that he had not been given any directions as to the future of the Regiment but nevertheless tasked the Commanding Officer to produce a paper with his views on the subject. The meeting was on a Friday and as normally happens in these situations the paper was required on Monday, when the DFC would be leaving for London, and a meeting at the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

On the same day, the Commanding Officer summoned his most senior officers to the Officers' Mess to present them with the daunting task of producing a paper for the survival of the Regiment. The start point was the 'military threat' – if the main reason for the drawdown of the garrison was the lack of a threat how would the Regiment survive? It became obvious that the team had to clearly define the credible threat which they believed existed and this, together with the ceremonial role and the moral obligation to preserve British military history, might convince the Ministry of Defence that there was a plausible need to retain the Regiment.

The team considered the air threat – Libya had been assessed to pose a threat in 1986 with the proposed use of Gibraltar as a forward operating base, surely this weakness had to be covered for the future? The team assessed that the Ministry of Defence had not taken this recent event into account and set about producing a paper that would provide the counter to this anomaly and at the same time ensure the survival of the Regiment. Other aspects of security such as counter-terrorism and the guarding of key installations were included, as was military assistance to the civilian population. On this basis the team concluded that the organization of the Regiment had to revolve around an air defence capability and that the sub-units would have to be manned by a mixture of regulars and volunteer reservists, as had been the case since the Regiment's formation. They also concluded that in a home defence scenario – the guarding of installations against 'terrorist attacks' – the air defence gunners would assume an infantry role. The organization drawn up was based on three sub-units, a Headquarter Battery (composed of regular and volunteer reserve officers and soldiers), and two anti-aircraft batteries armed with Blowpipe missiles. One battery was proposed to be manned by regular officers and soldiers, and the other by volunteer reserve officers and soldiers. The team concluded that the organization was economical and practical in terms of equipment and manpower. The paper was presented to the Deputy Fortress Commander, who appeared to agree with the appreciation and plan, and who duly left for the UK with all the relevant information.

The DFC returned from his meeting in the Ministry of Defence, and his news was not encouraging. The Ministry did not share the views expressed in the Regiment's paper and dismissed the need for an air defence capability, stating that Spain was an ally and that the Spanish Army had an anti-aircraft

Regiment just across the border and would provide air defence cover for a NATO partner. The MoD, however had asked for alternative proposals, and the DFC had agreed to pass on the task to the sponsors of the Regiment, Headquarters Director Royal Artillery (HQDRA), who would act in consultation with the Regiment.

Very shortly after, the CO visited HQDRA in Woolwich and subsequently a preliminary meeting was held at the MoD. At this meeting it became apparent that the Ministry was still of the opinion that there was no credible threat to Gibraltar and therefore there was no need for any major military unit stationed there – and this included the Regiment – but the term 'forward operating base' was mentioned on a number of occasions. At this preliminary round, arrangements were made for a formal meeting with representatives of the pertinent MoD departments. This meeting was attended by about 20 persons who quizzed the CO and the Royal Artillery sponsor. In those days the unit was not particularly well known within some MoD departments, so a good part of the meeting was spent explaining the status and origins of the Regiment. The majority of those present could not understand why the MoD was trying to run a Commonwealth force if this force was raised under the laws of Gibraltar. Eventually, but only after many explanations, it was accepted that the MoD had a substantial say in the continuance of the Regiment, in particular when it was paying the bill.

Once the parentage of the Regiment was established, the committee went on to discuss the threat. It was explained to the CO that there was no perceivable threat that could justify the retention of a sizeable military unit in Gibraltar. The CO made representations referring to the 1986 Libyan crisis and expounded the strategic position of the Rock so near to North Africa from where a threat could emanate in the future. The team then discussed with the committee possible terrorist scenarios and the guarding of key military assets, vital to ensure Gibraltar's capability to function as a forward operating base. The military heritage of Gibraltar was also raised, as was the matter of military support in case of civilian strife. At the conclusion of all the discussions, the CO was given to understand that perhaps the MoD could contemplate a token force of no more than a company group to safeguard the military assts. The following morning the team were summoned to appear in front of the Director Royal Artillery who had been asked to send them back to the MoD for further discussions. The result was a statement that an artillery unit was out of the question but that the MoD was prepared to look at an infantry organization. On that same day they sat down with a specialist team to draw up a ‘realistic’ organization.

After two days of meetings an infantry organization proposal was ready to be submitted to the Army Establishment Committee (AEC). The proposal comprised an infantry regiment with a regimental headquarters, a headquarter company and three infantry companies, one manned by regulars and the other two by volunteer reservists. The Corps of Drums and a band would form part of HQ Company. The proposed establishment increased the regular element from 76 to 256 and the volunteer reserve remained intact. In addition the Corps of Drums – which previously had to be found from the overall strength of the Regiment – was formally established and to the surprise of the team, provision was made for the establishment of a volunteer reserve band.

The next step was to appear before the AEC, and again the Royal Artillery appeared as sponsors to support the Regiment’s case. Barring some minor modifications the establishment proposal was accepted by the committee. This therefore gave the green light to the Regiment to recruit and re-role. There is no doubt that the Regiment owes its continuance to the sterling work undertaken by the Royal Artillery as sponsors. In particular it is indebted to Major Denis Rollo who spearheaded all the discussions and negotiations with the MoD. The Regiment was extremely lucky in having the support and assistance from Denis not only during this phase but on previous work which he had undertaken for the Regiment. It was ironic that at this stage the Regiment was to move away from a predominantly artillery unit to an infantry one but it was a step necessary to ensure its survival. The news was warmly greeted by the Regiment and Gibraltar as a whole. Naturally there were disappointments, particularly amongst the gunner element, but everyone pulled together to ensure the success of the changes to come.

THE INFANTRY REGIMENT, 1991–99

On 1 April 1991, the Regiment was finally reorganized into an all-infantry unit. The re-roled Regiment consisted of a Headquarter Company (Thompson’s Battery) and three rifle companies, of which G Company was regular, and the others comprising TA soldiers. With this change came a new responsibility: one of the results of the ‘Options for Change’ programme for Gibraltar was a reduction of the military footprint on the Rock. No longer would complete army formations be sent from the UK to Gibraltar to form the resident battalion. This decision ended a long and successful tradition: British Army units had served on the Rock continuously from the early 18th century. As a consequence, the Gibraltar Regiment took over the duties of the resident battalion. This was a proud moment for the Regiment, because it was a sign of the professionalism of the Regiment and its acknowledgement by the wider army and the Whitehall officials.

Escort to the new Colours.

These changes were fundamental, but they were not the only ones that occurred in the early 1990s. In 1993, women were recruited into the ranks for the first time ever. The initial batch of seven included Rachel Couper, 'The Kiwi'. She was extremely keen and determined and shortly after joining applied to become a regular within the MT Section and was accepted. Christine Haveland, together with the next five, transferred from HMS Calpe. In her civilian employment she worked as a veterinary nurse but was later to join the Regiment full time as a regular. Jenny Wiley transferred from HMS Calpe after 12 years of service. At the time she was the assistant manager at Companies House. Maria Smith worked as a radiographer at St Bernard's Hospital. Jacqui Prior worked as a teacher in Bishop Fitzgerald. She was later to become the first female member of the

Regiment to be commissioned. The final two women were Michelle Mor, and Jane Payas, who worked as an administrative officer for the Ministry of Defence. Also in 1993, the Regiment moved from Bella Vista to Devil's Tower Camp next to the airfield. The RAF was still in control of the camp and some initial teething problems had to be overcome before the Regiment started to feel at home. In order to commemorate its long-standing relationship with the Royal Artillery, the Regiment entered an alliance with the Royal Regiment of Artillery on 16 December 1993. This was to be followed by an alliance with the Corps of Engineers, which has close links to the Rock, on 22 June 1996.

Gibraltar was to suffer some internal turmoil during 1995 as a result of action taken to curb tobacco smuggling. This had become a high-profile activity among a percentage of the local population and Spaniards on the other side of the frontier. The Regiment was involved during the riots following the arrests of some fast boat owners and the confiscation of equipment from those suspected of running tobacco. There were ugly scenes in Gibraltar over a number of days, including the smashing of shop windows and damage caused to vehicles. The Regiment had not previously trained in riot control but undertook training in the run up to these events. A school of thought prevailed in Gibraltar that should the police require support from the military it was preferable for the Regiment to provide it rather than troops deployed from the UK. Deploying the Regiment would make it easier to de-escalate the situation whereas it was thought that using troops deployed from the UK might risk alienating the military from the population.

As the situation developed the police managed the situation and no request was made for military assistance with crowd control in the streets. The increasing number of people that were arrested did, however, create logistical problems: where to hold them after they had been detained, and where to obtain enough policemen in order to ensure their security under detention. This is where the Regiment came in. A holding area was established in Windmill Hill training area and the Regiment provided the men to build it and provide the security for the area as it became populated.

Various sections of the ground were secured with wire and wire netting as a reception area, which then linked to the training area buildings which were normally used for house clearing and other military exercises, but now served to hold those apprehended by the police. The whole zone was brightly lit with arc lamps and as the arrests continued into the night, with the unfamiliar location having a dampening effect on many of those arrested. It was interesting that some days later a letter appeared in the Gibraltar Chronicle from some of the men arrested praising the Regiment's personnel on the way they had conducted themselves.

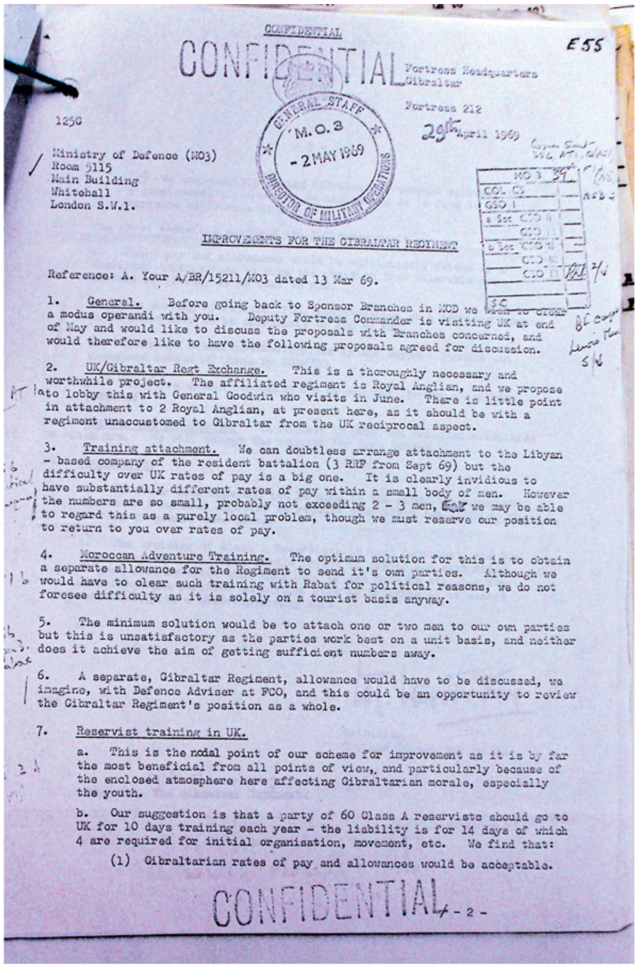
Ceremonial duties continued to play an important role for the Regiment throughout the 1990s. Parades and the like never turn into routine, but in 1998 an event occurred that was a new and outstanding experience for everybody involved. On 21 April 1998 the Regiment performed its first public duties in London by firing a 62-royal gun salute at the Tower of London on the occasion of Her Majesty the Queen's Birthday, the first unit other than the Honorary Artillery Company to fire a royal gun salute from the Tower of London. A second highlight that year occurred on 1 July when His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent presented the new Colours, on behalf of the Queen, to the Gibraltar Regiment. The presentation of new Colours took place during a parade at Devil's Tower Camp. The old Colours were laid up in King's Chapel and the new Colours were presented to the troops. Usually, Colours are only replaced after 25 years, so these new Colours should have served the Regiment until at least 2023. However, as with so many other aspects, the Regiment was an exception to the rule and soon events occurred that made the presentation of new Colours necessary much earlier.

First gun salute at the Tower of London.

BEYOND THE ROCK: THE GIBRALTAR REGIMENT AND ITS MEMBERS OVERSEAS

One of the key opportunities that resulted from the new structure and the end of National Service – and which had been recognized by the headquarters – was that money could be saved due to smaller numbers. This money could then be invested in the training of the Regiment, and enable the Regiment to conduct training beyond the shores of the Rock.

Additionally, when National Service came to an end the permanent staff had essentially been on the same tasking for many years. This consisted of training National Servicemen during their intake training and then revising and exercising them during their two-week camps. This repetitive work was beginning to take its toll. It was difficult to maintain a vibrant set of instructors at high pitch when they were doing the same form of training, intake after intake, year after year and always in the same local setting. Regimental Headquarters was aware of this and, together with Fortress Headquarters, sought solutions to the problem.



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Fortress Headquarters
Gibraltar

Fortress 212

29th April 1969

GENERAL STAFF
M.O.3
- 2 MAY 1969
DIRECTOR OF MILITARY OPERATIONS

MO 3 39
COL GS
GSO I
a Sec GSO II
GSO III
b Sec GSO II
GSO III
GSO III
SC

125G

Ministry of Defence (MO3)
Room 5115
Main Building
Whitehall
London S.W.1.

IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE GIBRALTAR REGIMENT

Reference: A. Your A/BR/15211/MO3 dated 13 Mar 69.

1. General. Before going back to Sponsor Branches in MOD we wish to clear a modus operandi with you. Deputy Fortress Commander is visiting UK at end of May and would like to discuss the proposals with Branches concerned, and would therefore like to have the following proposals agreed for discussion.

2. UK/Gibraltar Regt Exchange. This is a thoroughly necessary and worthwhile project. The affiliated regiment is Royal Anglian, and we propose to lobby this with General Goodwin who visits in June. There is little point in attachment to 2 Royal Anglian, at present here, as it should be with a regiment unaccustomed to Gibraltar from the UK reciprocal aspect.

3. Training attachment. We can doubtless arrange attachment to the Libyan - based company of the resident battalion (3 RRF from Sept 69) but the difficulty over UK rates of pay is a big one. It is clearly invidious to have substantially different rates of pay within a small body of men. However the numbers are so small, probably not exceeding 2 - 3 men, but we may be able to regard this as a purely local problem, though we must reserve our position to return to you over rates of pay.

4. Moroccan Adventure Training. The optimum solution for this is to obtain a separate allowance for the Regiment to send it's own parties. Although we would have to clear such training with Rabat for political reasons, we do not foresee difficulty as it is solely on a tourist basis anyway.

5. The minimum solution would be to attach one or two men to our own parties but this is unsatisfactory as the parties work best on a unit basis, and neither does it achieve the aim of getting sufficient numbers away.

6. A separate, Gibraltar Regiment, allowance would have to be discussed, we imagine, with Defence Adviser at FCO, and this could be an opportunity to review the Gibraltar Regiment's position as a whole.

7. Reservist training in UK.

a. This is the nodal point of our scheme for improvement as it is by far the most beneficial from all points of view, and particularly because of the enclosed atmosphere here affecting Gibraltarian morale, especially the youth.

b. Our suggestion is that a party of 60 Class A reservists should go to UK for 10 days training each year - the liability is for 14 days of which 4 are required for initial organisation, movement, etc. We find that:

(1) Gibraltarian rates of pay and allowances would be acceptable.

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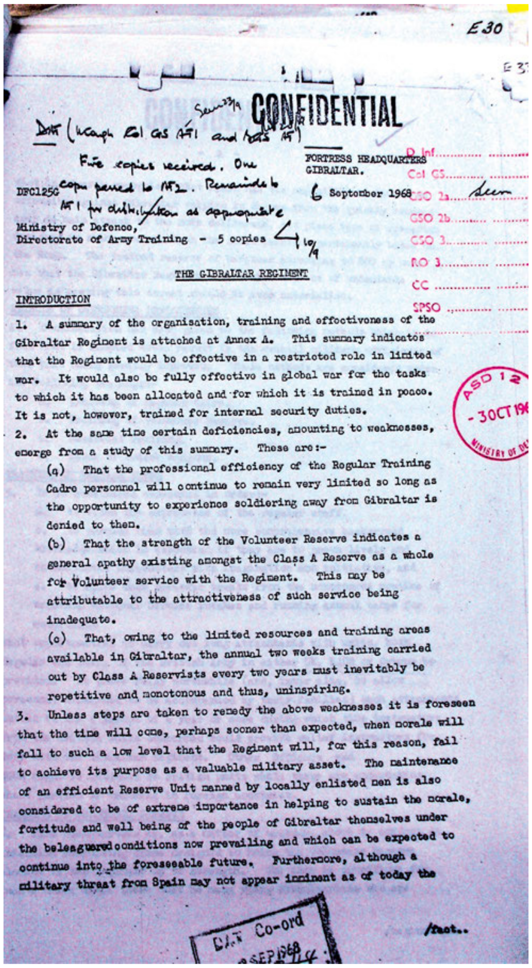
A letter from 1969 sent from the Fortress Headquarters to the Ministry of Defence outlining improvements for the Regiment, in particular training the Regiment in the UK.



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Seen 23/9

DAT (through Col GS AT1 and [illegible] AT)

Five copies received. One copy passed to AT2. Remainder to AT1 for distribution as appropriate

FORTRESS HEADQUARTERS
GIBRALTAR.

DFC125G

6 September 1968

D Inf ....
Col GS ....
GSO 2a .... Seen
GSO 2b ....
GSO 3 ....
RO 3 ....
CC ....
SPSO ....

Ministry of Defence,
Directorate of Army Training - 5 copies

10/9

THE GIBRALTAR REGIMENT

INTRODUCTION

1. A summary of the organisation, training and effectiveness of the Gibraltar Regiment is attached at Annex A. This summary indicates that the Regiment would be effective in a restricted role in limited war. It would also be fully effective in global war for the tasks to which it has been allocated and for which it is trained in peace. It is not, however, trained for internal security duties.

ASD 12
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2. At the same time certain deficiencies, amounting to weaknesses, emerge from a study of this summary. These are:-

(a) That the professional efficiency of the Regular Training Cadre personnel will continue to remain very limited so long as the opportunity to experience soldiering away from Gibraltar is denied to them.

(b) That the strength of the Volunteer Reserve indicates a general apathy existing amongst the Class A Reserve as a whole for Volunteer service with the Regiment. This may be attributable to the attractiveness of such service being inadequate.

(c) That, owing to the limited resources and training areas available in Gibraltar, the annual two weeks training carried out by Class A Reservists every two years must inevitably be repetitive and monotonous and thus, uninspiring.

3. Unless steps are taken to remedy the above weaknesses it is foreseen that the time will come, perhaps sooner than expected, when morale will fall to such a low level that the Regiment will, for this reason, fail to achieve its purpose as a valuable military asset. The maintenance of an efficient Reserve Unit manned by locally enlisted men is also considered to be of extreme importance in helping to sustain the morale, fortitude and well being of the people of Gibraltar themselves under the beleaguered conditions now prevailing and which can be expected to continue into the foreseeable future. Furthermore, although a military threat from Spain may not appear imminent as of today the

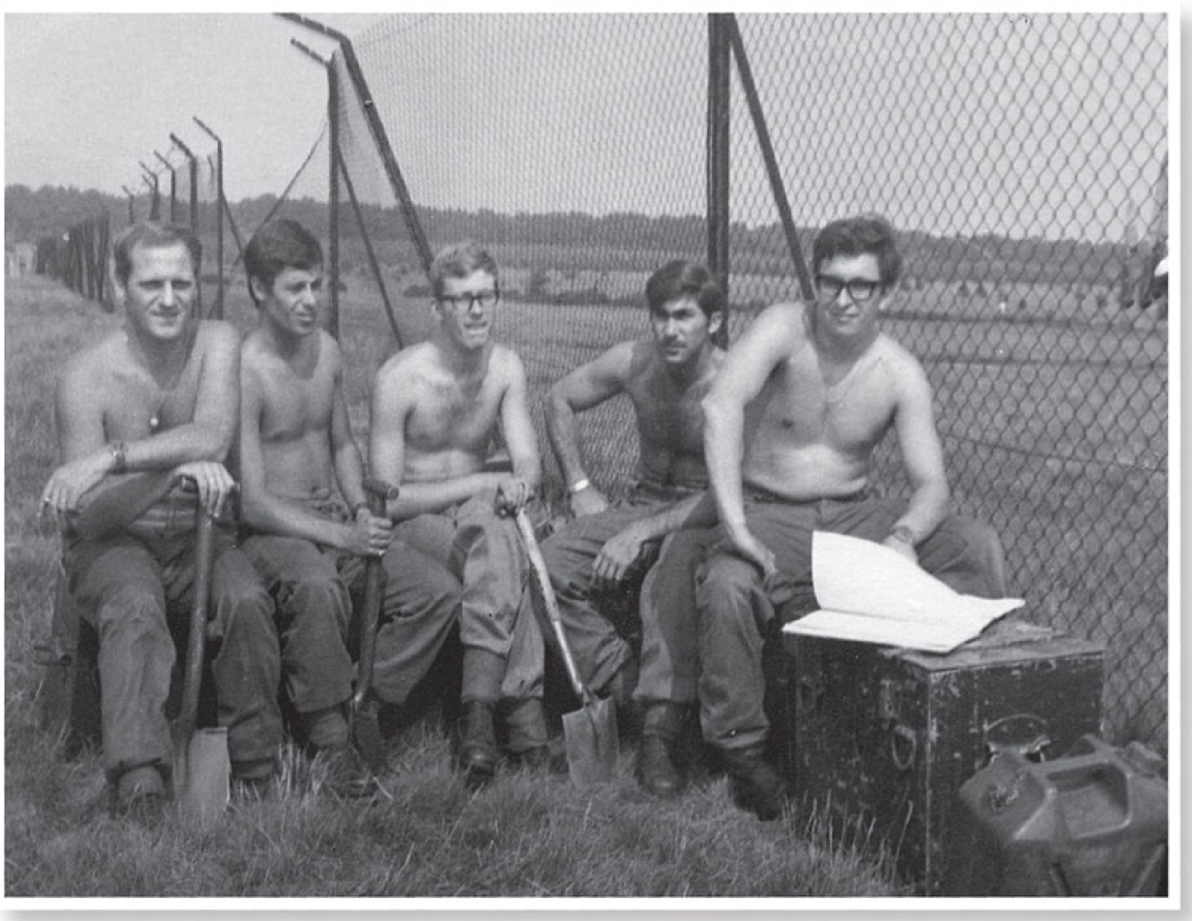
/fact..

DAT Co-ord
SEP 1968

1969: first thoughts on training abroad outlined by Fortress Headquarters Gibraltar and sent to the MoD.

This resulted in a series of ideas which were put to the Ministry of Defence even before the end of National Service had been announced. They included the prospect of officer and senior non-commissioned officer exchanges with other units, training attachments, and reservist training in UK. Owing to the geographical situation of Gibraltar, adventure training in Morocco was also proposed. Last, and by no means least, it was pointed out that the weapons being used in the Regiment needed renewing and upgrading. In particular, it was envisaged to change the Bren light machine gun for the General Purpose Machine Gun and the 3.5-inch rocket launcher for the 84mm anti-tank gun (Carl Gustav). Exchanges of personnel between UK units and the Regiment were considered one of the primary objectives, and they were planned to take place, initially, with battalions of the Royal Anglian Regiment. This was a sensible step, because the Regiment had entered an affiliation with the Anglians on 12 August 1968. The original policy allowed for one officer and two senior non-commissioned officers to be away on an exchange basis for a period of 12 to 18 months at a time. The British units concerned would be required to find relief instructors for the Regiment over the same period. The first officer exchange was to happen within two years, but, unfortunately, no arrangements ever materialized for senior non-commissioned officers. Shorter training exchanges were also considered with the Libya-based company of 3 Battalion Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, who were the resident battalion in Gibraltar at the time and occasional vacancies would be allocated to regular cadre personnel to accompany army units carrying out training overseas.

The question of adventure training in Morocco was looked at in two different ways. This was either by attaching Gibraltar Regiment personnel to the resident battalion sub-units during their training in that country, or by sending sections of the Gibraltar Regiment in their own right. The former idea was not thought to be ideal as only very small groups would be able to attend. So the second option was taken up to the planning stage. This would mean seeking political clearance from Rabat which was not expected to be a problem, and discussing the availability of a separate training allowance for the Gibraltar Regiment for this purpose. It was intended that this should be taken up with the defence advisor at the Foreign and Colonial Office when the opportunity could also be taken to review the Regiment's position as a whole.



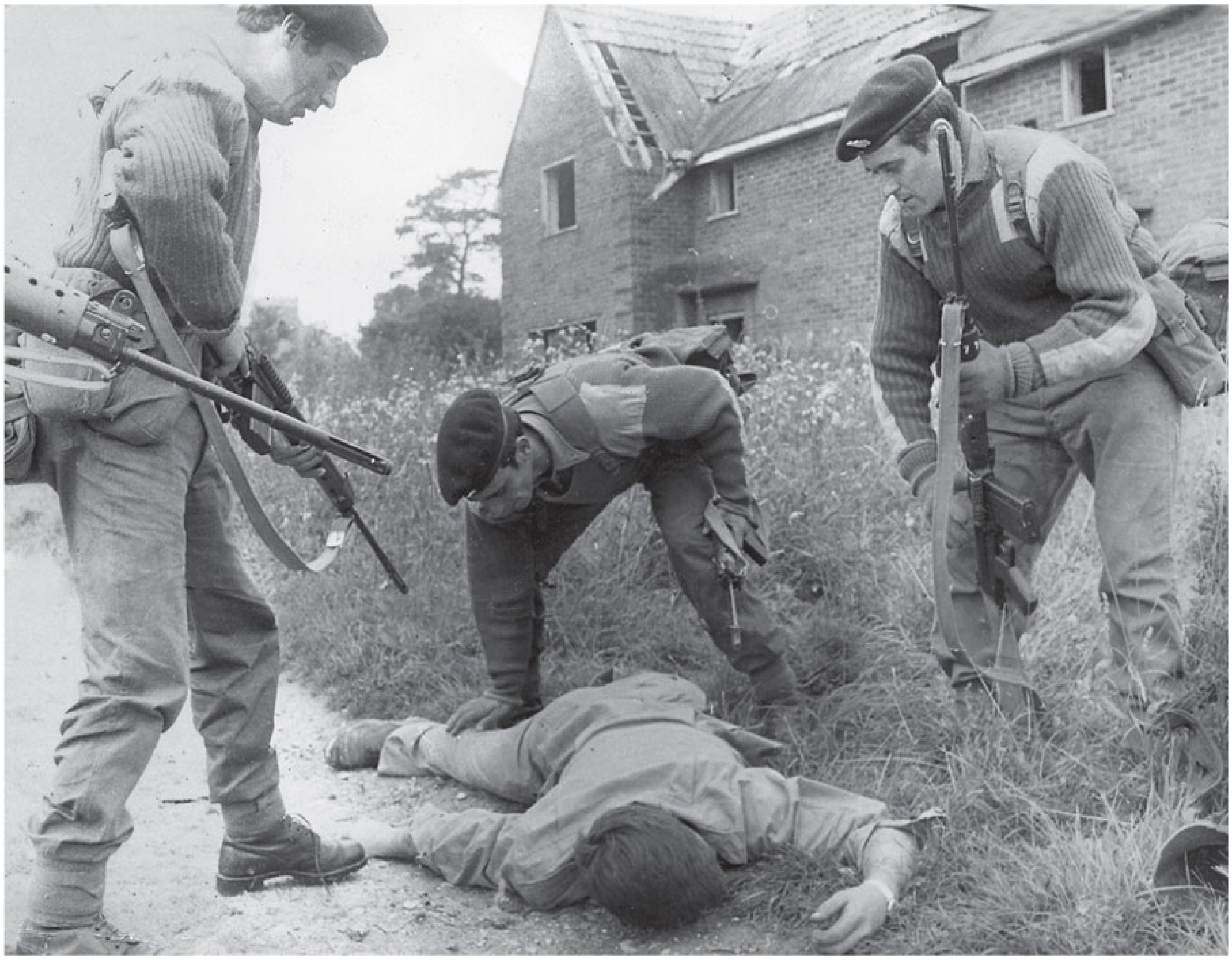
One of the first training camps in the UK in the 1970s.

A short break from digging. From left, Frank Silva, Joey Hill, Tito Vallejo, Alfred Brittenden, Joe Desoiza.

"A" COY. GIBRALTAR REGIMENT.
Depot The Queens Division.
Bassingbourne Barracks,
Royston, Herts.

It would be hard to lose this suitcase…

Infantry training, UK, 1970s



Searching 'suspects' during the exercise, UK, 1971.

Waiting to advance, training in the UK, 1971.

Moving forward to the firing range, UK, 1971.

The focus of the improvements scheme was on the reserve training in UK. It was considered by far the most beneficial from all points of view, in particular because of the way the closed frontier situation was affecting the youth in Gibraltar. The suggestion was that parties of 140 (later brought down to 60) 'A' class reservists should go to the UK to conduct their training each year. The liability was for 14 days of which four were thought to be needed for initial organization and moves, leaving the remaining ten days for actual training.

By August 1970, the first of these initiatives took effect when A Company, composed of 50 officers and men and commanded by Major Canessa, left for training in the UK. They were based at the depot, the Queen's Division, in Royston Hertfordshire. The training was organized by the depot instructors enabling all the reserve non-commissioned officers and men to undergo training and enabling them to practise their own skills on exercise. The standard achieved was good and in his post-exercise report Major Canessa made the point that the second week of training had been altered to make it more demanding, after the instructional team had seen the men at work.

The first week included handling of personal and platoon weapons followed by live firing up to the personal weapons test. There was then a tactical training phase including patrolling, living in the field and company-level training. In the second week there were three days of tactical exercises at section- and platoon-level to practise tactical and live firing skills including the firing of the 2-inch mortar and throwing of the 36 grenade.

The whole exercise was certainly a great success and the option to work in large and previously unknown areas, when all platoon weapons could be deployed and utilized to their full extent, was of great use to the company as a whole. During this camp there were opportunities for junior non-commissioned officers and men to cement the alliance with their opposite numbers in the Royal Anglian Regiment at social meetings. Visits were also arranged to places of interest such as the appropriately named Gibraltar Barracks.

A COMPANY, GIBRALTAR REGIMENT (1ST OVERSEAS EXERCISE)

Appoint	Rank	Name
Officer Commanding	Major	J. A. Canessa
Second-in-Command	Captain	E. R. Howes

Platoon Commander	Lieutenant	E. Britto
Platoon Commander	Lieutenant	H. A. Danino
Permanent Staff Instr/CQMS	Sergeant	J. D. Ritchie
Volunteer Reserve NCOs	Warrant Officer Class 2	F. Silva
	Sergeant	A. Brittenden
	Sergeant	R. Desoiza
	Corporal	R. Dalmedo
	Corporal	E. Enriles
	Corporal	H. Martin
	Corporal	R. Martinez
	Lance Corporal	E. Vallejo
	Lance Corporal	T. Vella
	Lance Corporal	B. Graffione
	Private	H. Byrne
	Private	W. E. Gadd
	Private	A. Seruya
	Private	O. Spiteri
	Private	H. P. Tosso
Conscripted	Private	J. Alman
	Private	L. P. Armstrong
	Lance Corporal	J. L. Bado
	Private	E. Bebeagua
	Private	A. Calamaro
	Private	J. L. Cavilla
	Private	A. Cerisola
	Private	O. Cerisola
	Private	J. M. Chappory
	Private	O. A. Davis
	Private	E. Fortuna
	Private	P. Franco
	Private	J. Garcia
	Lance Corporal	J. C. Hill
	Lance Corporal	E. C. Howard

	Lance Corporal	J. Imossi
	Private	R. A. Israel
	Private	A. Jeffries
	Private	A. F. Jurado
	Private	E. L. Latin
	Private	J. Llufrio
	Private	B. Lima
	Private	F. A. Napoli
	Lance Corporal	S. G. Norton
	Private	B. Parody
	Private	V. Payas
	Lance Corporal	C. Ramirez
	Private	C. Rocca
	Private	P. J. Rodriguez
	Lance Corporal	P. L. Savignon
	Lance Corporal	I. Tobelem

The first officer to gain from the proposed individual exchanges with other units was Captain ‘Fofi’ Casciaro, who left Gibraltar on 11 September 1970. Appropriately, following the alliance, he was to join 2nd Battalion Royal Anglians. Captain Casciaro and his wife Tita left Gibraltar by car. As they were making their way up through Spain, the ‘Poachers’ were ordered to move to Northern Ireland. On arrival in the UK Casciaro reported to Colchester as arranged, took over as Second-in-Command ‘A’ Company, bid farewell to a bemused Tita and moved to Northern Ireland, all in quick order. Once deployed in the area of Paisley Park as Company Second-in-Command, he was mainly engaged in administering the company and running the command post during ongoing operations. ‘Fofi’ remembers the time when, following the death of three suspected terrorists after a traffic accident involving a military vehicle, he was out with his driver and escort, and found himself in the same street, at the same time as the funeral procession. On another occasion during a contact, he was approached by a priest who made rather firm suggestions as to what the troops could do. In reply he made some rather direct statements as to what the priest could do. Later in the day the Commanding Officer agreed with his sentiments but advised that he should be aware that the priest was the Reverend Ian Paisley. Following the tour in Northern Ireland the battalion moved to Münster in Germany, spending most of their time escorting nuclear convoys and taking part in endless ‘Quick Train’ exercises. A keen sportsman, particularly in the hockey field, Fofi became an extremely popular officer within A Company and the battalion during his 18 months’ exchange, and initiated the best start possible for other attachments to come. Fofi might have been the first member of the Regiment to serve in Northern Ireland, but quite a few would follow, attached to British Army units, including Majors F. Brancato and D. L. Collado.

By April 1972, the company was away again, training in the UK under command of Major Ferrary, operating from the headquarters of the Queen’s Division at Bassingbourne, and training at Stanford Training Area. They were closely followed by the gunners from the Heavy Troop, who deployed to Germany under Major Prescott, and joined their hosts, two Royal Artillery batteries, the 21 (Gibraltar) Battery of the 50th Missile Regiment RA, and the 19 (Gibraltar) Battery of 39th Missile Regiment RA. The men from the

Heavy Troop, who normally fired the largest calibre gun within the British Army, the 9.2-inch coastal guns in Gibraltar, met up with these two batteries which operated the ‘Honest John’ free-flight missiles and M110 self-propelled 8-inch howitzers. During the first few days they were shown both these sets of equipment and instructed on the capabilities and how they would deploy and operate. After this, there followed an orienteering exercise. In true gunner fashion the first objective was the German equivalent of a pub. A 48-hour exercise involving other NATO troops followed, when the local gunners were tasked as enemy forces operating behind the lines. Their allocated transport, a three-ton truck was, perhaps not unintentionally, incapable of moving at faster than 30 mph but, nevertheless, they attacked the task with vigour. They came very close to capturing an armoured personnel carrier with crew which was lodged deep in a wood. Unsuccessful but undeterred they achieved better results in an ambush later on. They were in an area where blank ammunition could not be used, but inventiveness took over and cow pats replaced the blanks in a rather effective manner.

In early July 1972, the second regular officer to leave on an 18-month attachment was Major D. L. Collado, who was then serving as Regimental Second-in-Command. He left for Germany to join 3 Royal Anglian, where he was appointed Company Commander of Command Company with responsibility for the Reconnaissance Platoon, Signals wing and the Corps of Drums. In June 1973 the battalion moved to Northern Ireland; specifically Creggan Camp on the outskirts of Londonderry. The conflict was at its height then, and it was a demanding change from the large deployments and manoeuvres in Germany to command post work, patrols and the watch towers of Northern Ireland.

Lieutenant-Colonel Porral and his men in the UK.

That same month the Air Defence Troop left for their UK training exercise in Manorbier. This camp was commanded by Captain S. Perez, the Air Defence Troop Commander, and Major S. Prescott, the Battery Commander, accompanied the party. The camp culminated with live firing at airborne targets, normally a sleeve towed by a Canberra, something impossible to achieve in Gibraltar due to local range restrictions.

On arrival in the UK.

Exercises away from Gibraltar continued in 1974 when four officers and 21 other ranks, led by Major D. L. Collado, left with 3rd Battalion the Queen's Regiment on a two-week training exercise in Kenya. The main emphasis of the training was on-the-field firing of platoon weapons which was held in the Nanyuki area, northwest of Mount Kenya. The contingent from the Regiment worked with the battalion on some days but by and large organized their own training, mainly patrolling and navigational exercises that took advantage of the large expanse of unfamiliar ground they were operating on. The men attending the camp were a mix from several sections of the unit, some Territorial Army and some regulars including drivers, store-men and clerks as opposed to a single sub-unit, which added a new dimension of complexity to the exercise.

Francis Brancato, later Commanding Officer of the Regiment, as a young subaltern in 1980.

Over a couple of days men from 3 Queen's and the Regiment also had an opportunity to visit Nairobi and Samburu National Reserve. Their accommodation was in tents and the howling and roaring of wild animals outside the perimeter was too good an opportunity to miss. Lance Corporal Mario Sene organized an impromptu 'mission' in the middle of one night, targeting a particular member of the group who was not entirely at ease with the proximity of the fauna. The sudden grabbing of his leg from something that came in from the edge of the tent while he was asleep must have been the highlight of the two weeks for him. The men flew back to Gibraltar just before Christmas, together with Support Company 2 Queen's.

In 1975, Officer Cadet D. Duarte found himself at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He had been selected to fill the vacancy of officer in the permanent staff in July the previous year, and had then been enlisted into the Regiment to begin pre-Sandhurst training. He was only the second Gibraltarian officer to attend Sandhurst. Prior to this, officers from the GDF and the Gibraltar Regiment had been commissioned at Mons Officer Cadet School. The Sandhurst course lasted a year but successful cadets were commissioned after the first six months.

The following year, 1976, saw further training in the UK. In May and June the battery went to Larkhill. This was the first time the troop was to fire the 105 PH after their conversion from the 9.2s. Thirty-two men travelled to Larkhill for this camp under the command of Captain S. Perez. Although arrangements could be made to fire the guns in Gibraltar, and many successful shoots were to take place later, these shoots had to be directed out to sea. The gun drill could be practised in Gibraltar, but there was no comparison to firing in a large training area, where the guns could be properly deployed and many other aspects of gunnery practised.

The next camp, held a month later, was the Air Defence Troop camp. They deployed to their usual base, Penally Camp, next to the Manobier Ranges where they could fire at airborne sleeve targets and on occasions, at static land targets. The troop, which was the smallest of the three sub-units, had 28 all ranks attend the camp. The last sub-unit to move to the UK for the exercise was the infantry company. In all, 63 all ranks attended this camp, which was mainly geared to field firing in the extensive ranges available there. Shortly after the company's arrival back in Gibraltar the Officer Commanding, Major F. Dellipiani, a reserve officer, resigned his commission prior to standing for election with the GLP/AACR Party. He was sadly missed by the company, which he had always led 'from the front' with a great deal of verve and energy. The new OC was Captain E. M. Britto, with Lieutenant D. Hooper taking over the post of Second-in-Command. An additional change, as a result of the previous OC's resignation, was the appointment of Lieutenant G. Valarino, who had been 'Off Establishment', and now joined as platoon commander.

Perhaps the biggest benefit of the exercises in the UK was the opportunity for the infantrymen to fire their small arms and anti-tank weapons on long ranges, which could test the men and weapons to the limit. As an example, the electric target range in Gibraltar was only 135 metres long with scaled-down targets to represent the size of a man at 200 and 300 metres. This was no comparison to firing on a 300- or 600-metre range where the effect of wind on the round had to be taken into account and adjusted as the range to the target changed. The most effective however were the 'field-firing ranges' which were essentially large areas of open ground where troops could carry out attacks at section level (10 men), as platoons (35 men) or even as a company of approximately 100 men, and at each level combine their tactical skills with marksmanship under realistic conditions. The changes in training facilities were considerable and were soon reflected in the standards achieved.

The cycle of training had, by then, developed around a three-year plan, based on the time required to book training areas in UK and also allowing time for the booking of transport, ammunition and other requirements necessary for a successful camp. The Air Defence Troop continued attending Penally training camp in South Wales and fired from the Manorbier ranges. The Light Troop deployed to various training camps within the Salisbury Training Area. The company tended to move around more and trained in Salisbury, Brecon, the Cinque Ports training area near Hythe and at Otterburn. Recces of training areas were generally carried out in February or March with the camps usually taking place in May or June, but some camps took place in September.

A good flavour of what individuals of the Regiment were doing at the time and how and where they deployed is given by the experience of Francis Brancato. In August 1978 Second Lieutenant Francis Brancato was newly commissioned into the Regiment after completing the standard officer course at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Interestingly, there were two other Gibraltarians attending the same course at RMAS – Frank Galliano (Irish Hussars) and James Gaggero (Irish Guards). Officer Cadet Brancato's Platoon Commander and instructor during the course was Captain David Seed, who, years later, was to be appointed Regimental Second-in-Command during Lieutenant-Colonel Brancato's tenure as Commanding Officer of the Regiment.

The Corps of Drums

The Corps of Drums in the 1970s.

The Corps of Drums performing in 1977.

The Corps of Drums made its appearance as a fledgling unit in 1972. The inspiration behind this innovation had come from Major Arthur Ferrary – who was to take over command of the Regiment in August of that year. He wanted to ensure that the Regiment would have a Corps of Drums of which all members of the unit could be proud. When initial moves were taken to develop this new idea the Volunteer Buglers were being taught by Private R. Labrador and ably guided by the Regimental Sergeant Major, Mr Willis, who had previously been a Drum Major with the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. Most of the buglers had previous experience from the bands of the Scouts and St Johns Ambulance, which made the instructors' lives much easier.

Corporal Walker, an instructor within the permanent staff, was given the task of administering the Corps of Drums and he soon began to take instruction for his future role as Drum Major, from Drum Major Colin Green, an ex-Marine who was then Drum Major of the Royal Green Jackets, the resident battalion on the Rock. Corporal Walker was keen on the appointment and took in the instruction at a pace. The original members of the Corps were a mix of regular soldiers, mainly from the Regiment's Maintenance Troop and volunteer soldiers from the reserve. Among those from the regulars were Privates Maurice Figueras, Francis Sanchez, Jimmy Wahnon, Charlie Attard, Jimmy Moss, George Buttigieg and 'Noddy' Davidson. From the reserve there were Lance Corporal Neville Dalmedo and Privates Elio Cohen, Jimmy Dalmedo and Silva. Dalmedo, Cohen, Dalmedo and Silva all had previous experience playing bugles and drums from their membership of the Scouts band. Later Mike Andrews and Mr Lightbody, originally in the Ulster Rifles, were to join. Drum Major Colin Green also instructed the buglers, who then broke up into groups and practised under supervision of one of the more experienced members in each group.

With excellent tuition and a great deal of enthusiasm from the men, the members of the Corps of Drums progressed in their training and were soon eager to perform in public. Their first performance was during a Sortie Day Parade when they marched and played behind the Band of the Royal Green Jackets. It was a low-key affair, coming at a time when they were not yet quite ready to go out by themselves, but the experience of appearing in front of the public gave them a boost, if one was needed.

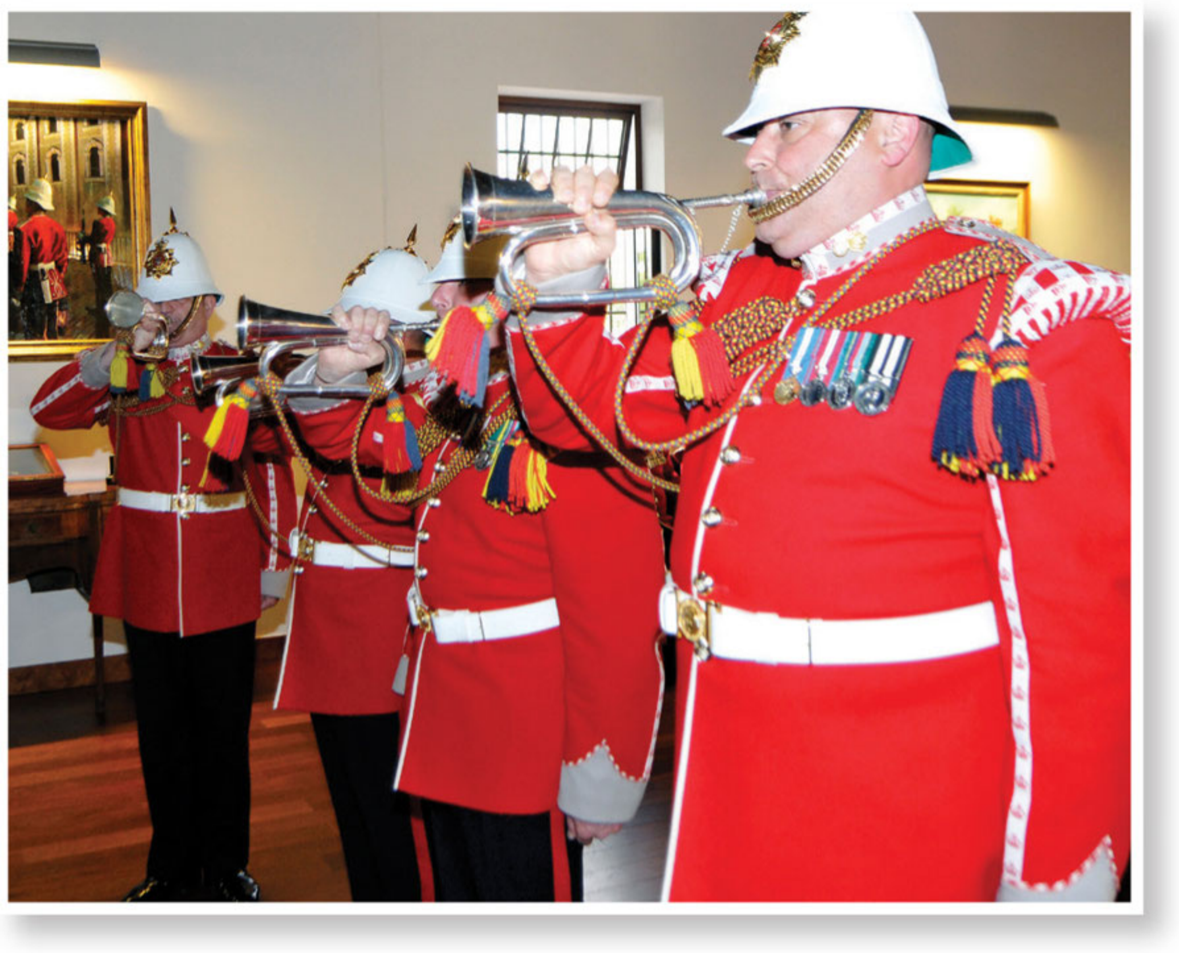
April 1977 saw the first performance of the Corps of Drums at a Convent guard mount provided by the Regiment. At this time the Corps of Drums, under the very able management of Drum Major Robert Walker, was still composed of regular and TA members who had volunteered, or had been volunteered, for an extra appointment. This guard mount was followed by another the following week when the Regiment again provided all the troops for the parade. The Governor, Sir John Grandy, who, a week earlier had also watched members of the Regiment's Maintenance Troop fire a gun salute in honour of Her Majesty the Queen's birthday, saw fit to congratulate the unit. In a

message to the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel D. L. Collado, he wrote:

> The Guard Mounting Parades this morning and last Monday were exceptionally well carried out reflecting a high level of discipline. Smartness, turnout, precision and personal bearing were all up to the standard I have come to expect from the Gibraltar Regiment. I was particularly pleased with the Corps of Drums whose admirable first appearance at this ceremonial was so clearly appreciated by the spectators. Please pass on my congratulations to all on both parades. I am very proud of them.

The ‘Options for Change’ programme brought about many changes for the Regiment. For the Corps of Drums, the implications of the programme were fully positive. The Corps of Drums, which previously had to be found from the overall strength of the Regiment, was now formally established. To the surprise of the team, provision was also made for the establishment of a volunteer reserve band. Thus, in 1992, the Band and Corps of Drums was founded. The musicians continue to play a very active role in public duties on the Rock and abroad, from St Michael’s Cave to Buckingham Palace. In 1999, for instance, the Corps of Drums played on two occasions at the Tower of London for the general public before Beating Retreat in front of dignitaries and high-ranking military personnel. The Corps of Drums then went on to play together with a amassed Corps of Drums at the last Royal Tournament. The quality of their music is second to none and they continue to be the perfect ambassador for the Regiment. Who would have thought that those standing in the footsteps of the St John’s buglers would one day proudly lead the Royal Gibraltar Regiment through the streets of London to perform public duties and mount the Queen’s Guard outside Buckingham Palace?

Gala dinner at the Garrison Library.



The buglers in Grand Battery House, 2014.

In London on ceremonial duty.

Dining out Lieutenant-Colonel Perez in St Michael's Cave, 2010.

In 1981 Brancato was posted to 3rd Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment based at Colchester, where he took over 7 Platoon C Company as Platoon Commander. He was the first regimental officer to command a regular rifle platoon, as those who had been posted before him had been of more senior rank and had held Company Second-in-Command appointments. A tour of Cyprus followed, and following his return to Colchester, the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands took place. It was largely assumed that 3 Royal Anglian would be deployed to the Falklands as they were on Spearhead duties and in fact, the battalion deployed to Sennybridge over a weekend to test-fire their weapons including their Milan anti-tank guided weapon, which few units had been issued with at the time.

An elated Lieutenant Brancato rang his home in Gibraltar to inform his parents that he was about to go off to fight Galtieri. This was not to be happen, however. Following their test firing the battalion were met by the Commanding Officer and Regimental Sergeant Major who informed the troops that they would be deploying to Belize instead. There remained a chance that Brancato might be able to get near the Argentine military – on the basis that he could speak Spanish fluently. He managed to get his name on a list of interpreters and attended an interview at MoD, but by the time the Royal Anglians were due to move to Belize, no call had come back, and so Belize it was. This was to prove an interesting deployment as it was considered possible that Argentina might incite the Guatemalans to open up a second front in Belize to tie up British forces. This would inevitably assist Argentinean intentions in the Falklands. In the event, nothing along these lines occurred. Time passed, and during a quieter period when he had taken over as Company Second-in-Command, a patrol came back with the unlikely information that they had met a Gibraltarian judge in the jungle and he was making his way to camp to meet him. The information was received rather sceptically by Lieutenant Brancato, but sure enough out of the jungle walked Judge John Alcantara (Circuit Judge North) and his wife Nati. Neither of the two men had been aware of the other's presence in Belize, and a great Gibraltarian chinwag ensued, followed by further meetings in Belize City whenever possible. Lieutenant Brancato went on to become Commanding Officer of the Regiment in the 1990s and ended his military career with a posting to headquarters KFOR in 2003–04.

Preparations for the first UK training camp after the Regiment's change of role began in April 1991. It involved recce visits of Shorncliffe garrison and the extensive ranges complexes available at Hythe and Lydd, followed by a recce of Longmoor training area. G Company, the Regiment's new regular company, trained in both areas for a period of one month in September 1991, and during that time, elements of I and B Companies, together with the Corps of Drums, trained in the same locations over a two-week period. The training cycle continued after the change of role with the Regiment benefitting from the opportunities offered from training abroad.

Training in other parts of the world was also conducted, and several members of the Regiment were lucky enough to get attached to other army units and join them for their training in BATUS (British Army Training Unit

Suffield) in Canada. Perhaps the largest contingent deployed in 1994, when Corporal Leo Hayes, Lance Corporal Alex Raymond Stone, Private Christoph Ghio, Private Anthony Butron, Private Alan Carrara, Private Sean Kanyon, Private Lee Wright, and Private Ronnie Wallace deployed with the Royal Anglian Regiment. In 1998, another interesting opportunity arose for the Regiment. This was the year of the presentation of the new colours. Mark Randall, OC G Company, approached the CO to do something special prior to the parade. As it was he managed to get G Coy on two separate Grand Prix exercises in Kenya (a dismounted infantry battle group exercise) with the Prince of Wales Royal Regiment and the Royal Anglians, respectively. A platoon from G Company plus supporting staff/instructors deployed on each exercise following a package of beat-up training. These were rather large deployments for G Company and the Regiment, but this is not to say that the 'Kenya-experience' from the 1970s had fully vanished within the Regiment. For instance, a section, consisting of Corporal Alex Stone, Lance Corporal Donald Drimmie, Private Louis Vassallo, Private Keiron Alvarez, Private Stuart Dalli, Private Jonathan Cartwright, Private John Doolan and Private Chris Ghio deployed on Exercise Grand Prix with the Black Watch in 1996.

As could be seen, the members of the Regiment spent a great deal of time training abroad. This clearly had its value. Lieutenant-Colonel J. Perez, Commanding Officer 2006–09, summarised why training abroad remains crucial for the Regiment, and his words still ring true today, perhaps now more than ever:

> In Gibraltar we simply don't have the training estate and resources of the UK and other training establishments overseas. Therefore you cannot realistically develop as a soldier if you do not leave Gibraltar. Although we work primarily in Gibraltar we cannot train to the highest standard if we only train and operate locally. Our troops need the experience of career courses overseas as well as the vital operational experience needed for us to stay current in skills and doctrine and professional mind-set. We do not lose sight, though of our core tasks; despite our breadth of experience our foremost operational commitment is to ensure the security of Gibraltar.

CHAPTER 5

THE ROYAL GIBRALTAR REGIMENT: 1999–2014

NULLI EXPUGNABILIS HOSTI

One last time on parade with the old beret, 29 April 2006.

The old berets are put away for good...

A NEW NAME AND A NEW STRUCTURE

In the 1960s, the Regiment's attempt to gain the prefix 'Royal' to its name had been stopped by the Governor, Admiral Sir Varyl Begg and the Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Geoffrey Baker. They had feared that such a move could be seen by Spain as a political provocation. By the 1990s, things had clearly changed: Franco was dead and Spain was a parliamentary monarchy. Both the UK and Spain had become members of the European Union and NATO. The arguments of the 1960s were thus no longer fully convincing. As a consequence the decision was taken to change the name of the Regiment to the Royal Gibraltar Regiment. On Regimental Day, 28 April 1999, the Regiment was bestowed the honour of the prefix 'Royal' by Her Majesty the Queen and the announcement was celebrated with a parade outside the Convent. A great deal of the work towards achieving this had been done 'behind the scene' by the Honorary Colonel, Lieutenant-Colonel John Porral, who had, virtually on his own, mounted a determined campaign within the MoD. This honour was something the Regiment had always yearned for and was considered a great privilege by all. The name change could also be seen as an omen: the new world had not become a safer place in the 1990s and the overall strategic situation would become ever more unpredictable and unstable in the years to come. For the Regiment one of the consequences, and arguably the most dramatic one since the Second World War, was the increase in war and battle experience that the members of the Regiment would gain in the coming years.

Despite the name change, the members of the Regiment continued to wear the blue beret as a reminder of the Regiment's artillery heritage. On 29 April 2006 a significant change in the Regiment's insignia took place; the old dark blue berets of the artillery were replaced with khaki infantry berets. This could be seen as the final recognition of the regiment's changed role as an infantry unit since 1991. The cap badge became deep bronze in colour and was backed by a flash in the Regiment's colours – the scarlet of Gibraltar's infantry protecting the limestone grey of the Rock.

Before this manifestation of the Regiment’s new role occurred there had been another important change: when the Regiment adopted an all-infantry role in 1991, it was still relying heavily on the TA component: only one of the three rifle companies was formed of regular soldiers. It soon became apparent that this structure could not supply the manpower needed to fulfil the increased responsibilities of the Regiment. As a consequence, in January 2005 the Regiment was increased by a regular company at the cost of a TA company. Having said this, operations were not restricted to overseas deployments. In 1998, under its ‘old name’, the Regiment deployed a full company to protect the ballistic nuclear missile submarine (SSBN) USS Ohio, and the following year provided protection for another nuclear missile-armed submarine, the British HMS Vanguard. Since then, the Regiment has offered protection to a number of nuclear submarines, although most of these have been smaller than those of the SSBN category. However, probably the greatest and most important change was that, as a unit, the regiment became a more operationally focused entity. This transformation would serve the Regiment and its members well in the busy years to come.

Members of the Regiment in what would be an unusual environment for a ‘normal’ infantry unit.

The suspicious bag is picked up by the vehicle.

Carrying out checks and maintenance to ensure that the Explosive Ordnance Disposal vehicle is ready when needed.

OPERATIONAL DEPLOYMENTS

The Regiment is a hybrid, light role infantry battalion comprising regular and reserve companies. It is constantly on operations within Gibraltar. Gibraltar's proximity to Africa and its position as the gateway to the Mediterranean make it a target for terrorist attacks on British assets away from the mainland. The Regiment deploys and trains for all possible scenarios, including enhanced security postures during increases in the alert state. The Regiment also has responsibilities to support the Royal Navy and its assets which are unique in the British Army: the soldiers are justly proud of these skills. Due to the strategic importance of Gibraltar and the Regiment's role as the resident battalion, the Regiment has capabilities and tasks that surpass that of the usual infantry unit, such as supporting the police in counter-terrorist exercises, maritime interdiction operations in fast boats and explosive ordnance disposal.

The consequence of this complex task, coupled with the fact that it is a smaller than normal infantry battalion, is that the Regiment as a unit has not routinely deployed on operational tours with the remainder of the Army. It has not deployed as a unit, but all individuals are required to deploy on operational tours attached to other battalions or serving within formation headquarters. Since taking over the infantry role in 1991, the Regiment has deployed personnel to every conflict, war or theatre of operations in which the British Army has been involved. Not all individuals who have deployed can be mentioned or their stories told; the stories shared are representative of a wider experience of the Regiment as a hybrid infantry battalion with extensive individual operational experience.

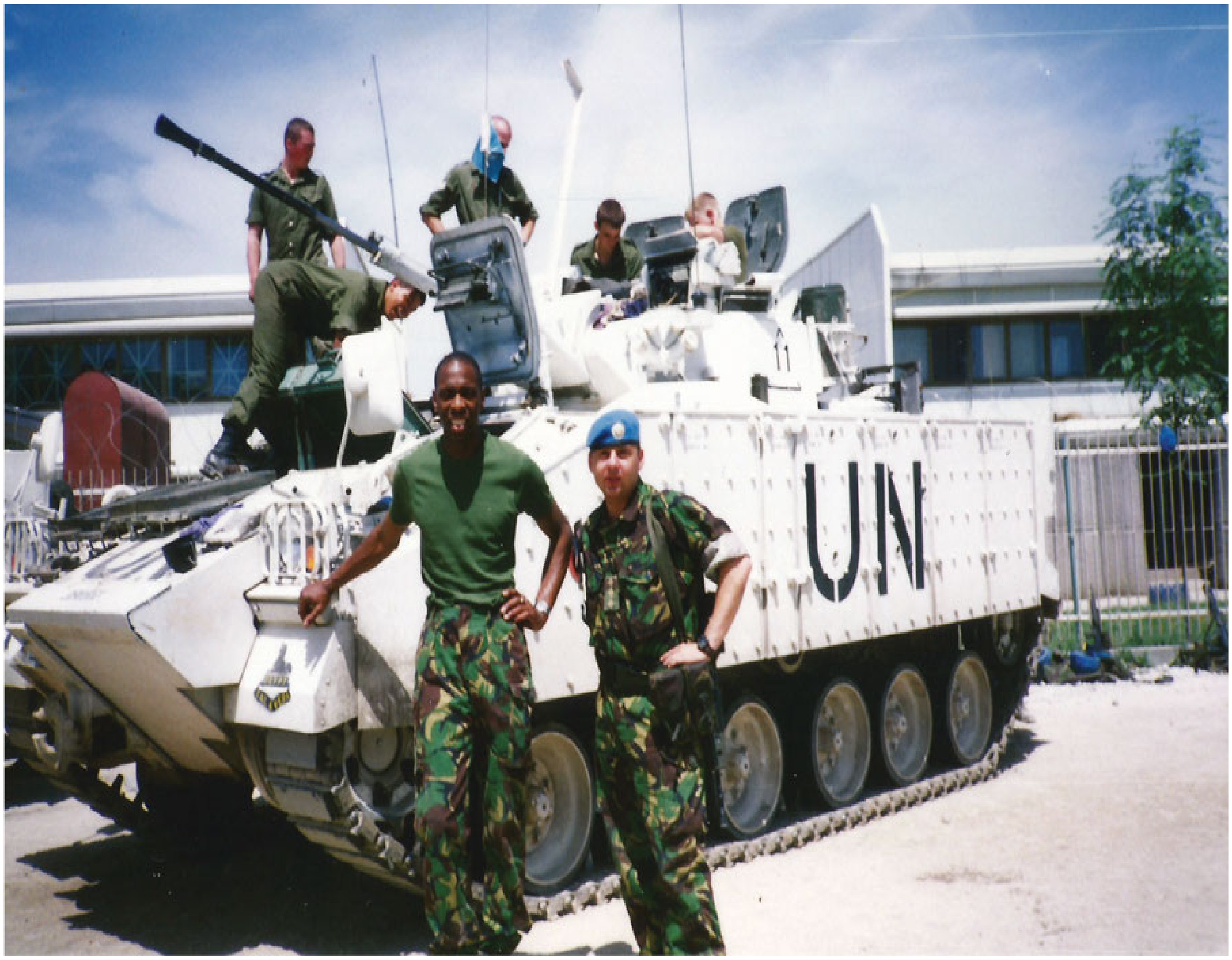
As an ongoing commitment, the Regiment continued to support the British Army engagement in Northern Ireland, with individuals attached to other British Army units. In 2001 the first deployment of a female member of the regiment occurred: Lance Corporal Evelyn Phillips – who had joined the Regiment in 1998, and who had worked first as a chef, then as an administrator – deployed to Armagh as training clerk to 4 Royal Irish in

Omagh for just over three months. In July 2001, Corporal Jason Olivera deployed to Armagh with 2 Royal Irish for six months. He spent most of his time patrolling the local streets, but he also found time to meet up with Sergeant Canessa, who was in Northern Ireland at the same time, stationed in Ballymena with the Fusiliers. Sergeant Canessa was there with a group of Gibraltarians including Private Adam Perez, who was employed as a chef. When Perez left, Lance Corporal Tierney took over the job – obviously the Mediterranean cuisine went down well with the folk from England and Northern Ireland! The RG members stationed in Ballymena deployed with the Fusiliers and had also carried out their pre-deployment training with them. Initially it was envisaged that they would all together go on a six-month tour. However, due to security requirements in Gibraltar at the time the group was split into two groups and each group did a three-month tour instead. The first group contained Sergeant Grech, Lance Corporal Borg and Privates Perez, Ghio, and Baglietto. This group was followed by the second batch under the command of Sergeant Valverde. Other events – more of which below – overshadowed the deployments to Northern Ireland, but the Gibraltarians continued to deploy in great numbers. Probably the biggest detachment was sent to Northern Ireland in 2005 attached to 2 Royal Anglian who were the resident battalion at the time. The troops were there to carry out, in the words of Lance Corporal Lance Mauro, 'the normal Northern Ireland routine' of patrolling, vehicle checks and acting as standby support in the Londonderry area. The individuals on this tour were Corporal Ronnie Wallace, Lance Corporal Lance Mauro, Private Alfred Garro, Private Carl Gaiviso, Private Nicholas Balbuena, Private Luis Cano and Private Pete Battison. It was a rather quiet tour, not least because the Good Friday Agreement had resulted in a general reduction of political violence in Northern Ireland. Private Garro remembered that, because of the agreement, they were not allowed to patrol the streets of Londonderry. Between March 2004 and September 2005, Captain J. Williamson was also deployed to Northern Ireland, attached to 2 Royal Anglian in Ballykelly. He was employed as the second-in-command of a rifle company, the same role that he had held in Gibraltar before his deployment. When he left Northern Ireland, Major O'Shea became the Officer Commanding Headquarters Company.

Captain Mark Randall in Bosnia, 1994.

The end of the Cold War was hailed as the beginning of a new era of peace and happy conviviality, one in which old divisions would be overcome and Europe, in particular, could live in peace, freedom, and security. However, this positive expectation was quickly tarnished. The new strategic framework in Europe showed its ugly side in the Balkans in the 1990s when the break-up of Yugoslavia led to war and genocide. Gibraltar and the Regiment, as part of Europe and the British Army, could not stand idly by when the international community was called upon to provide solutions for the conflicts in the Balkans. Soldiers from the Rock came forward to assist in the mission working towards a stabilised area at the other end of the Mediterranean. In 1994, Captain Mark Randall was deployed to join the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), the first United Nations peacekeeping force in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Yugoslav Wars. Captain Randall served in Bosnia with the 2 Royal Anglian Regiment throughout his tour (Operation Grapple 4). In March 1995, the mandate of the original UNPROFOR came to an end, but the situation demanded further deployments of international troops. The peacekeeping mission was restructured into three other forces: the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in Macedonia, the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO) in Croatia, and restructured UNPROFOR operations ongoing in Bosnia and Herzegovina until their replacement by NATO and EU missions in December 1995. From May to October 1997, Lieutenant Adrian O'Shea deployed to Bosnia with 2 Royal Fusiliers. Furthermore, the Corporals John Paul Payas, Tito Danino and Joe Benteolo deployed together with Private Keiron Alvarez. More members of the Regiment served in the Balkans over the coming years and thus, when HRH the Duke of Gloucester visited the recently re-named Regiment on Friday 7 May 1999, one of the main tasks of his visit was the presentation of the Bosnia Service Medal to Sergeants Leo Hayes, Winston Payas, Danny Rowbottom and Corporal Jimmy Canessa. All four had recently returned from a tour of duty to the Balkans, a clear indicator of the new role of the Regiment and the deployment of its soldiers to areas of crisis around the globe. The same year, another member of the Regiment was posted to Bosnia. Lance Corporal Jason Olivera had joined the Regiment in June 1995, and served for the first five years in G Company before transferring to a clerical role. At the end of 1999, he was posted to Banjaluka as part of the SFOR general security force, which at the time consisted mainly of German and Dutch troops. In addition to providing security for the troops, Olivera was engaged in winning 'hearts and minds'; engaging with the population and trying to win their support. Amongst other things they produced thousands of flyers. One thing that Olivera enjoyed particularly was the support he could give to the local radio station which was run by the British Army. When he arrived in post, he was the last of a group of three that would become known as the 'Three Musketeers'. Before him, Sergeant Darren Davis and Sergeant Terry Gager had held the same post – a clear indicator that the performance of the Gibraltarians had been valued! In July 2000 the Regiment had various members posted to different locations in the Balkans; three of its members were posted to Kosovo to undertake peacekeeping roles. Sergeant Major Steven Victory, Colour

Sergeant Gerard Fitzgerald and Corporal Dwayne Trinidad were all attached to 2nd Battalion the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers as part of the 7th Armoured Brigade in Pristina at the Multi National Brigade Centre. From April to November 2001, Lieutenant J. Williamson represented Gibraltar in the Balkans. Deployed to Pristina, he was part of a civil-military cooperation team (CIMIC). His main tasks were liaising with local non-governmental organisations and working on the so-called Yugoslavia Project: providing security for the ethnic minorities, mainly gypsies and Serbs, who were still in the city and its environs. These families lived all over the city and providing security could be a bit of a nightmare. Amongst other things, Lieutenant Williamson organised transport and provided security so that the Serbs could go and pay their respect in the cemeteries. Often, Lieutenant Williamson would have to mobilise more than 100 men for this, but, to him, it was all worth it. ‘They were all very grateful. We gave them a bit of hope and freedom’. Whatever the grand strategic situation in the Balkans was at the time, giving people a slice of humanity can only be a good thing. While Lieutenant Williamson was engaging with the local population at the tactical level, Lieutenant-Colonel Mark Randall worked at the strategic level. In 2002, he deployed for a six-month tour to the Balkans. His interest in the region had been fuelled by his 1994 tour to Bosnia and he was keen to see how the Balkans had changed since his first deployment. He was posted to NATO HQ Skopje in Macedonia as part of a special liaison team working for a Spanish general. His responsibilities included liaising with the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM). The main aspects covered during his term were the national elections and the population census, both of which happened during a period of high tension and crisis. The post entailed attending meetings with ambassadors, Macedonian ministers, NGO mission directors and briefing three-star generals. The requirement was to provide accurate and up-to-date reports on the crisis situation, the conflict between warring parties, ethnic disturbances, the introduction of the new policing plan and recommend appropriate military support and action. Lieutenant-Colonel Randall did a good job: he was awarded two certificates of appreciation for outstanding contribution to NATO Operation Amber Fox and NATO Headquarters SKOPJE, and, upon his return to Gibraltar, became the new Commanding Officer of the Regiment in 2003.



Captain Mark Randall in front of a Warrior armoured fighting vehicle in Bosnia 1994.

Captain Mark Randall and Sergeant 'Dimi' from the Belgian army in Bosnia 1994.

Lieutenant-Colonel Mark Randall taking over command of the Regiment from his predecessor, Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Brancato in 2003.

In 2004, the British engagement in the Balkans as part of SFOR officially came to an end when, on 2 December 2004, SFOR disbanded and its functions were assumed by military units from the European Union under the EUFOR Althea banner. Under this ‘new management’ British troops remained in the region, though their numbers were reduced, and so did members of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment who continued to serve for a peaceful coexistence of the different nationalities in this troubled region. Thus, the Regiment still had a presence there in 2007. It is fair to say that members of the Regiment have played their role from the beginning and at all levels, from the tactical ‘boots on the ground’ to the strategic sphere.

By the time EUFOR took over responsibilities in the Balkans, new storm clouds had formed in other parts of the world. The attack on the World Trade Center and the ensuing ‘War On Terror’ meant that the British Army, and with it the Royal Gibraltar Regiment, would soon tread on soil that might have been unknown to the individual soldiers who deployed, but with which the British Army has been connected through a long and bloody history: Afghanistan and Iraq. These two conflicts (Afghanistan 2001–14 and Iraq 2003–11) would overshadow the British Army’s experiences in other recent wars and conflicts and forge a new British Army. From the beginning to the end, the Royal Gibraltar Regiment was in the midst of the two wars.

The first Gibraltarians to set foot on the desert sand of Iraq deployed during Telic 1, the actual invasion of Iraq in 2003. The group consisted of Major Andrew Bonfante, Major Danny Freyone, Sergeant Gary Samuels, Corporal Anthony Butron and Lance Corporal Louis Vassallo. The individuals were attached to different units and formations and had very different, but all important, roles in the campaign, including medic (Samuels), media (Bonfante), logistics (Freyone) and front-line resupply (Vassallo and Butron).

Major Colin Risso MC

Major Risso deployed to Afghanistan between July 2004 and February 2005. In the Operational Honours List on Friday 9 September 2005 it was announced that Major Colin Risso, Officer Commanding G Company, had been awarded the Military Cross for the actions he took when his convoy came under attack in Afghanistan. Major Risso was serving as the Plans Officer in the Combined Joint Task Force in Bagram, Afghanistan when the convoy he was travelling in came under heavy attack in a narrow wadi. His Military Cross citation explains that:

Despite the hail of small arms fire, including rounds coming into the rear where he was seated and the Rocket Propelled Grenade explosions around the vehicles, Major Risso identified the main threat from the right flank and immediately engaged the enemy with an M16 rifle, a weapon he was unfamiliar with. The HUMVEES were unable to put down fire, their grenade launchers having jammed and putting down a rapid rate of fire Major Risso could sense the desperate situation. Running short of ammunition he also took the Colonel's M4 rifle to maintain a high rate of suppressive fire on the enemy positions. Using both weapons and stocks of ammunition in the vehicle he maintained this rate of fire expending over 150 rounds to allow the Colonel to gain control of the convoy and begin to coordinate its extraction.

Lieutenant-Colonel Colin Risso as Lieutenant-Colonel and Commanding Officer of the Regiment, 2013.

After the fierce firefight lasting 10 minutes, Major Risso assisted in the loading of casualties onto the medical evacuation helicopter and helped focus the remaining soldiers on defence from further attacks. Major Colin Risso was awarded the Military Cross for operational gallantry. Major Risso summed up his experiences in Afghanistan by saying that:

I am absolutely overwhelmed at being awarded a Military Cross. It is good news for the Royal Gibraltar Regiment and Gibraltar as well. I enjoyed working alongside US Forces and Afghanistan is a beautiful country. However, the best reward has been the birth of my second child the day after I arrived back home.

Corporal Butron in Iraq

After his return from Iraq, freshly promoted Sergeant Butron, who had joined the Regiment in 1988, wrote a small pamphlet in which he summed up his experiences and which was used in the unit to prepare other individuals for their operational tours to Iraq. This pamphlet forms the foundation of his report below:

Corporal Butron in his 8-tonne truck, which he named 'Belen' after his wife (Bethlehem in Spanish), prior to another supply trip to the fighting troops of F-Echelon. As usual, the vehicle was fully loaded with ammunition.

'At 01:00Hrs on the 21 March 2003, 39 Armoured Engineer Squadron from 32 Engineer Regiment, began the daunting task to clear the final part of the complex obstacle that marked the Kuwait/Iraq border. This was comprised of 2 berms of sand 7 metres high, in the middle a moat dug 10 metres deep and 6 metres wide filled with oil, heavily fortified with a length of concertina barbed wire, electric fences and tank/anti-personnel mines.' As Butron states, 'We went in there in a bit of a rush, which caused some logistical issues for our troops'.

‘The crossing was to be undertaken by the First Fusiliers Battle Group (1RRF BG). The 1 RRF BG’s task was to secure a bridgehead for the rest of 7th Armoured Brigade to enter Iraq. This Bridgehead was supposed to be an unopposed crossing, 24 hours after the US Forces had entered Iraq from the West, but we became opposed by Iraqi forces delaying their advance. This caused our Brigade to step up and breach immediately. The initial adrenaline rush soon wore off and an anti-climax feeling crept up after the initial artillery and mortar fire in support of the advance. That soon changed and the adrenaline came back, as some small arms contacts were made towards the direction of a bunker system some 500 metres away. There were clear indications that there had been a large force around only hours before. The advance during the first day was slow, as the constant warning of “Scud, Scud, Scud” was announced through the radio or the sounding of the vehicle horn. I was detachment commander for the prompt issue of ammunition to the spearheading companies and tank squadrons of the Queen’s Royal Lancers. Reality came too quickly – as soon as we passed some charred bodies of an American Abrams tank destroyed by Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPG). This made me come to earth and rethink that this was no exercise of what I was accustomed.’

‘We moved largely unopposed that day and night, at times the safe protection of our armour used to disperse and fight some armoured resistance up front leaving the more vulnerable but essential soft skin vehicles on our own. Occasionally some groups of Iraqi soldiers attacked sporadically with small arms fire and at times with RPGs.’

British Warriors providing much-appreciated armoured cover to the soft-skinned vehicles of Corporal Butron and others. Note the luminous drabs tied to all vehicles that were used for identification purposes. The US issued louvered reflectors, seen on the vehicles, which served the same purpose.

‘On 24 March we prepared for the offensive onto the Al Basrah International Airport. Initial reports stated that the US Forces had passed through and that was required for the 1 RRF BG was to take over in situ. Reality was not to be as simple as that, as the BG was soon shaken on approaching the airfield by T62 and T72 tanks. Mortars and some small arms were also fired upon us on route towards the airfield. The skirmish did not last long and soon we had taken with airfield.’ The attack had a comical side to it, as Butron remembers: ‘We took 86

prisoners, but did not have any transport available for them. So they were put on airport shuttle buses. These buses were hot-wired which, for whatever reason, resulted in music coming on which could not be switched off.'

'Operations for the capture of Basrah city were planned and conducted from this airfield. Fighting, reconnaissance patrols and ambushes towards the outskirts of the city were all initiated from here. During the operations we were often the main target, as the enemy was trying to cut off resupply to the fighting troops. Often, pockets of resistance were left in between the armoured spearhead of our formation and us who were driving soft skin vehicles. So, we had to use our infantry skills to overcome this resistance. We were also engaged in the seizing of the "bread basket", a store depot in central Basra, which was a nasty experience, especially as mines could be found everywhere. The food in there had been withheld by the regime. This place had sentry posts every 100 metres, barbed wire, electrified wire and the perimeter was mined around its 1x1 kilometre edge. It clearly showed that the "bread basket's" main function had been to defend and deter itself from its own population, not to supply the suffering people. The location was immediately used as a staging point to redistribute food to the city and its surroundings after the take-over of the city. I remember it being used extensively on patrols and escorts for convoys.'

BASRAH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Corporal Butron flying the Gibraltar flag at Basrah airport.

On 1 May 2003 President Bush declared the end of major combat operations in Iraq. What lay ahead was the reconstruction and lifting the infrastructure of the country. This seemed an impossible task, as there wasn't much of an infrastructure anyway.'

'I left with LCpl Vassallo on 3 July 2003, a bit skinny, tanned and exhausted. With mixed feelings of returning back home in one piece and feeling unhappy about those that will never come back and see their families. Returning home and back to our Battalion what fills me with joy and satisfaction is the fact that so many of our members of the

Battalion have and still are, volunteering for being sent abroad on operations.'

After General Tommy Frank's speech to 7th Armoured Brigade, Corporal Butron (right) talked to some US tank crews and took this photograph on one of their M1 Abrams tanks. Lance Corporal Vassallo can be seen on the left.

السلام على الش
على شهيد المحراب

Sergeant James Gracia (left) and Corporal Mark Cooper (right) on patrol in Al Amarah during Operation Telic 5 in the early months of 2005.

On vehicle patrol with the Scots Guards during Operation Telic 5.

Sergeant James Gracia on his Warrior, Iraq 2005.

Vehicle patrol in Al Amarah, Operation Telic 5.

Sergeant James Gracia with an interesting find of live ammunition, Operation Telic 5 2005.

Together with their colleagues from the Scots Guards, Sergeant Gracia and Corporal Cooper enter one of the villas owned by Ali Hassan al-Majid, better known to the world as ‘Chemical Ali’, Iraq 2005.

This was just the beginning of a constant stream of soldiers who would deploy to the sands of Iraq. During Telic 5 (November 2004–April 2005), eight members of the Regiment deployed with the Scots Guards. Corporal Dean Castrey (later Regimental Sergeant Major) was one of them. He was brought in as an individual replacement for a soldier in C Company of the Scots Guards, and so he did an individual two-week pre-deployment package before flying out to Iraq. He was in theatre from January until the end of March. He was employed as a team commander, a Warrior dismount commander and as multiple second-in-command. It was a busy time, but obviously not busy enough for Castrey: he also took part in the battalion triathlon and organised the company rowing team. He was based in Shaiba, a place that Anthony Butron had helped seize in 2003. And the Gibraltar link does not end there. When Castrey was in Shaiba, the Garrison Sergeant Major was Stuart Bensadon, and the Camp Provost Sergeant was Corporal Chipolina, both also from the Regiment! A number of RG soldiers were employed mainly in camp security and protection in the so-called 'Right Flank Company': Borg, Traverso and Tosso. This could be a bit of an unexciting task, but everybody was very alert after an IED exploded 100 metres away from the main gate. Four individuals were attached to what was called 'Left Flank Company': Sergeant James Gracia, Corporal Mark Cooper, Private Kev McGuian and Private Andrew Perez. Their company spent a great deal of time patrolling in Al Amara where, as Private Perez said, 'the threat was quite real'. The idea was to create a show of presence, and for this foot patrols were essential. Sergeant James Gracia, who would later be commissioned and become Regimental Second-in-Command, remembered that they were on patrol one day after they had arrived. For him this was a special challenge, because he was in charge of a multiple, but was not qualified for the Warrior armoured vehicle that was being used by the Scots Guards. Luckily he was on good terms with his corporal, who was qualified! Al Amara might have been dangerous, but it was also, as Corporal Cooper, said 'the jewel in the crown. So, after having been there we were given the unpleasant [he used a different word] stuff: camp protection in Shaiba'. Corporal Cooper remembered one incident in particular. One night he was on patrol with a sniffer dog when suddenly he was being fired at. He went to ground and, following the rules of engagement, did not fire back because the firing had stopped. It finally turned out that the shots had been fired by a 14-year-old boy: the sniffer dog had frightened the boy's animals and he was expecting poachers. Behind the boy was a tent with 15 women and children. If Cooper had fired back he would have caused a bloodbath. Corporal Cooper summed up this experience by saying 'It is always good to follow the rules of engagement, they are there for a reason.' During another patrol in the same area Gracia and Cooper were approached by a distraught father: his daughter had accidentally poured boiling oil over her arm. The patrol were able to help, the medic tended the burn and soon the girl was feeling better. This created a high level of trust between the locals and the British soldiers which remained until the end of the tour.

Corporal Cooper talking to the local population in the Al Amarah area.

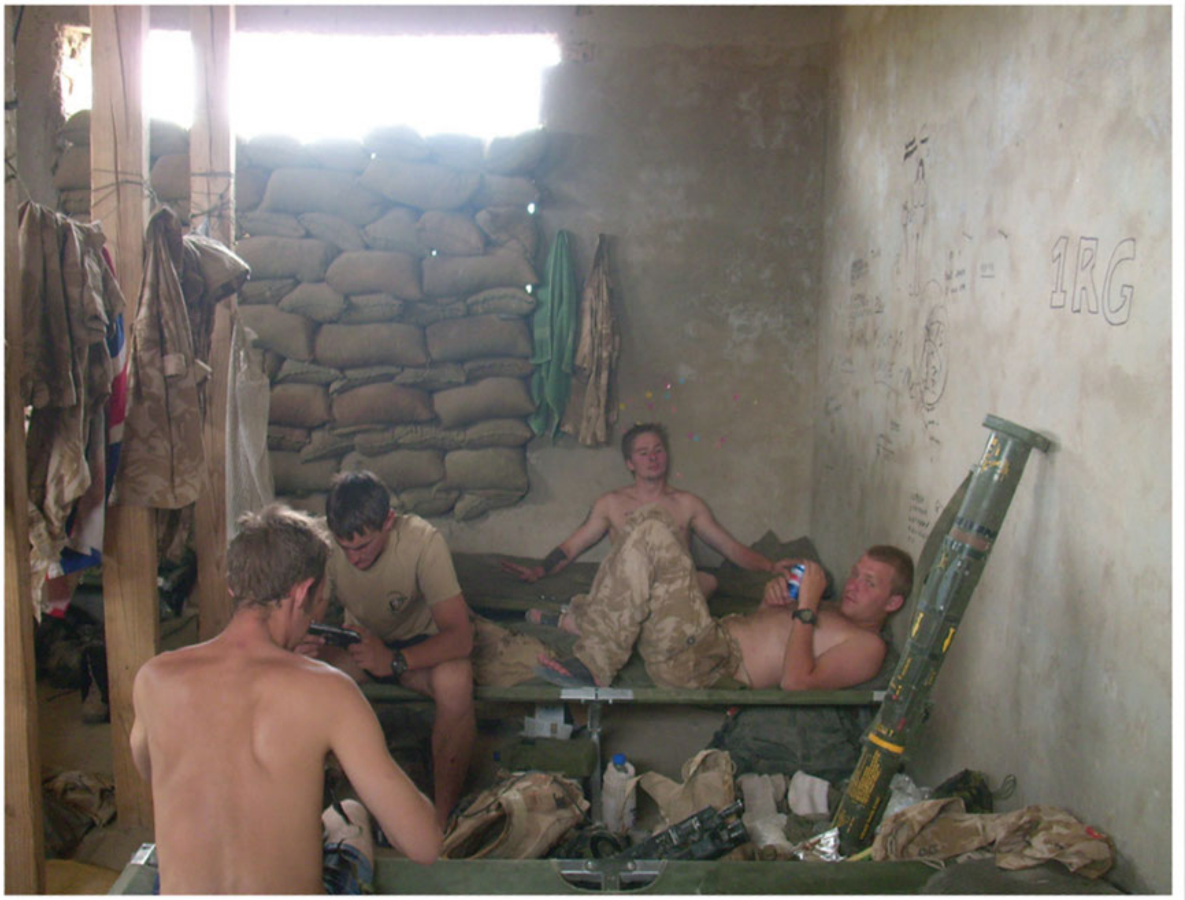
Winning hearts and minds: Corporal Cooper engaging with the local population.

Another group of Gibraltarians also used Shaiba as their base. Fourteen members of the Regiment deployed on Telic 8 with 2 Royal Anglian: Sergeant Ghio, Sergeant Zayas, Corporal Hassall, Corporal Thorne, Corporal Brocklebank, Lance Corporal Lavagna, Lance Corporal Caines and Privates Parody, Doolan, Oakes, Montegriffo, Celecia, Balbuena and White. The tour lasted from May to November 2006. It was an intensive one, characterised by a lot of fighting and casualties. On this tour one event confused the men: on 5 November 2006, Saddam Hussein was sentenced to death by an Iraqi special tribunal. When the news was heard there was much celebrations by the local population which included – as always in that part of the world – weapons being fired in the air. The British troops were at first unsure whether this was part of the celebrations or whether they were coming under attack! Sergeant Ghio, who also was on that tour, started as a G4 liaison officer, with the task of establishing links with and advising the Iraqi police. This job, which included seizing weapons, was really a captain's job – which says a lot about the quality of the RG personnel! Later, he became a multiple commander and also the Company Sergeant Major of B Company which was based at the Shatt al Arab hotel in a tented camp. There, they came under indirect fire nearly every night. All this was rather unpleasant, but the worst experience was when he was watching England play in the football World Cup and the insurgents chose to send indirect fire into the camp. What a nuisance!

Dayan Pozo, here as a captain.

A rather impressive encounter, Herrick 6.

Ready for patrol, Herrick 6.



Luxury accommodation in the FOB, Herrick 6.

Private Peter Battison, Herrick 6.

TEA out of stock
HOT CHOC out of stock
CAPPUCINO out of stock
LATTE out of stock
ICE TEA out of stock
OPENING TIMES
FROM WHEN I WAKE UP TILL WHEN I CANT BE ARSED ANYMORE
JIM DAVIES

The ‘operational coffee-shop’, Herrick 6.

In those years, the British Army was not only engaged in Iraq, but also in Afghanistan. It was therefore only logical that members of the Regiment would deploy there as well. The first member of the Regiment who would stand on the sand of Afghanistan was Major Colin Risso, who deployed between July 2004 and February 2005. During the spring of 2007, 13 members of the Regiment deployed to Afghanistan on Operation Herrick 6. Prior to deployment there had been three months of intensive pre-deployment training in the UK and Kenya. In January 2007, Major Lopez and Warrant Officer 1 Class Payas deployed to Kabul where they were responsible for the training of officers in the Afghan National Army. Lieutenant Pozo, Sergeant Canepa and several men deployed to Helmand Province and formed part of 12 Mechanised Brigade attached to 1st

Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment. On arrival they were split into different subunits with Sergeant Canepa and Privates Battison, Hastings and Galliano joining B Company and Lieutenant Pozo with Privates Gilasbey, Pozo and Holden joining A Company. Soon enough the troops had to leave the relative security and comfort of Camp Bastion behind and conduct high-intensity operations. They remained in this state for three months. During this period both companies headed up all battle group operations and it was here that they experienced intense and close combat, with the men often finding themselves fixing bayonets as they closed in on the enemy.

Initially they harboured out in the desert with vehicles, and inserted on foot into the green zone where the vegetation was extremely dense and visibility was sometimes only 20 metres. There were up to 250 Taliban in their area and the men stayed deployed for up to a month, often conducting ‘Advance to Contact’ throughout the day with temperatures that were hardly bearable even for the Gibraltarians. During this period they operated and lived from their belt-kit and would be re-supplied with water and food every 24 hours, at night.

The contacts would usually start by the men being ambushed from multiple locations with the enemy using rocket-propelled grenades, heavy machine guns, small arms and mortar fire. Locating the incoming fire was extremely difficult and it was not long before the operations were nicknamed Advance to Ambush! The insurgents were well coordinated and their fire was accurate. The coordination of friendly fire from all arms was of paramount importance and on many occasions the troops found themselves saved by the accuracy and firepower of 81-mm mortars, 105 light guns and attack helicopters – a true example of combined arms warfare.

After six weeks in theatre, rest and recuperation (R&R) was available for some of the troops for periods of two weeks at a time. This was very welcome as all were tired and needed to recharge their batteries, but it did put a strain on those left behind: on one occasion one of the Gibraltarians found his platoon was down to 13 men. After three months of operations B Company re-deployed to Kajaki. Kajaki is situated to the north of the Helmand River and their mission there was to protect the dam from the Taliban and maintain the 3-km FLET (Forward Line of Enemy Troops) that had been achieved by C Company. The patrolling schedule in this area was considerable – patrols were carried out almost every day and if not every day then every other.

All members of the Regiment were grateful and honoured to have taken part in a tour that was without doubt the most mentally and physically demanding experience in the military lives of the Gibraltarians. During the deployment the battle group conducted four major battle group operations and over 100 company-level operations. There were more than 350 separate engagements and over 1,000 Taliban were estimated to have been killed by the battle group.

All the men deployed had their share of experiences under battle conditions. Lieutenant Dayan Pozo started his tour as commander of A Company's fire support team. Under command he had four Land Rovers WMIKS (Weapons Mount Installation Kit) making them very 'heavily armed Land Rovers!' They had vehicle-mounted machine guns and one had a grenade thrower. Within days of joining the company they were involved in an operation against the Taliban which, though successful, resulted in casualties on both sides. On another operation soon after, they were on the front line for over 13 hours, during which they took part in nine separate firefights. Dayan remembers bullets ringing off the rocks and missiles flying overhead and very heavy expenditure of ammunition from his team. The worst moment of his tour was when the armoured vehicle he was travelling in struck a mine, killing a corporal from the Royal Anglians, who was sitting close to him. His final comment on the tour however was, 'I'm looking forward to having another chance to deploy on operations later in my career'.

Private Alex Gilasbey's first comment on his tour was, 'The Royal Anglians were great, we did our pre-deployment training with them and they were always very friendly towards us. I learnt a lot from them, but they never treated us any different from one of their own. There was never a "Them and Us" attitude and I am still in touch with several of them'. As was to be expected he had his share of hairy moments. On a particular day, as a rifleman in A Company, he remembers that they had 11 separate contacts with the enemy. 'After we had cleared a Taliban compound, they fired at us with RPGs [Rocket Propelled Grenades] and we had to cut across open ground to withdraw. While this was happening another section was putting down covering fire which enabled us to regroup.'

Private Luke Holden felt that he had done all the training and now wanted to do it for real. He certainly had the chance – at Nowzad they were constantly in and out of firefights. Nowzad is the capital of the Nowzad district, located about 65 miles from Camp Bastion. Holden remembers that it was a centre for opium production and a stronghold of the Taliban. Previous units who had been in the area dubbed it ‘Apocalypse Nowzad.’ One engagement Holden is likely always to remember took place when they were tasked to clear a compound some distance away. The first section went forward across open ground and blew a hole in the wall. While his section was crossing the open ground, they came under intense fire and went to ground. Most men managed to make it back to a ditch, but not all. Holden was also still out in the open. He was pinned down for three or four minutes, but recalls that it seemed a great deal longer. In the end he emptied his magazine at the general direction of the enemy and ran back to the ditch covered by those behind him.

Private Marco Galliano joined the Regiment in 2006; although originally from Gibraltar he had been brought up in Namibia. He was full of praise for the pre-deployment training in Kenya, which, with hindsight, he felt emulated the conditions they would experience in theatre. His introduction to operations was relatively slow, initially spending some time defending Forward Operations Base ‘Robinson’. But in mid-April 2007 they were deployed on Operation Silicon which was conducted in the upper Gereshk valley. This was the largest operation in Afghanistan to date and the first time a British unit entered the green zone. The operation continued until late July and Galliano felt the best measure of the action was the fact that by the end of it he was 10lb lighter!

Gerard Fitzgerald, here as a captain.

Private Jon Hastings felt that going on an operational tour would make him a better soldier. With hindsight at the end of the tour he said. ‘It was all a new experience for me but it was good – all of it’. And experience he did gain, in particular while he was patrolling, including a six-hour contact with enemy forces, and being weighed down with ammunition and equipment for long periods in temperatures approaching 50 degrees. On one particular patrol in the Kajaki area he was manning the machine gun. When the patrol was fired at he was moved up to a small hill to return fire. He felt something hit his helmet and thought it was a stone kicked up by an incoming round. He shouted to his commander that something had hit him and carried on firing. Later, as they moved to a flanking position, he could feel something rubbing his back and asked his mate to check it out, but nothing could be seen. On their return to camp he took off his body armour and saw there was a hole in it. Cutting it open further they found a 7.62mm round lodged inside. Checking the rest of the kit they found two holes in his helmet – one at the top and one at the bottom. The bullet had entered his helmet, but had not pierced the inner protection, instead it travelled to the back of the helmet and then exited into the body armour but without enough energy to penetrate the back-plate. It then remained there prodding him in the back for the rest of the day. Speaking about it later Jon said. ‘I was totally uninjured which proves that my kit did what it was supposed to: save me. They took my helmet and body armour away for further testing – but I have still have the bullet that nearly got me. Despite all this, I would volunteer to do it all again, I enjoyed carrying out the job that I’d been trained for.’

Warrant Officer Class 2 Coleing in 2009.

When the members of the Regiment arrived in Camp Bastion at the beginning of their operational tour they were greeted by a familiar face, Warrant Officer Class 1 Gerard Fitzgerald, who was on a six-month deployment as Garrison Sergeant Major of Camp Bastion. In this role Warrant Officer Class 1 Fitzgerald looked after the running of daily life within the garrison, over and above this he maintained security, coordinated the actions of all army units and ensured that good military standards were maintained. At the time, Camp Bastion had a garrison of 3,000 British troops and 2,000 from other nations and it was here that battle preparations took place prior to deployments. On this posting Fitzgerald said:

I was promoted to Warrant Officer Class 1 in 2006 and took over the Sergeant Major post in Camp Bastion in 2007. We landed in the dark on a cold January night and as the tailgate opened a figure appeared and called my name. The plane was packed and I headed to meet him. When I reached him he said ‘Welcome to Camp Bastion, this is now your camp’; it was the best feeling in the world. At the time it was one of the most prominent Sergeant-Major postings in the British Army and I was lucky enough to be selected to do it.

Gerard Fitzgerald had joined the Regiment in 1984 as a volunteer reserve, but in 1986 he made the life-changing decision and joined the regulars: ‘I was working for Lloyds Bank at the time and it was becoming increasingly difficult to fully commit to the Reserves, it got to a point where it was either leave the bank or leave the Reserves. I had enjoyed my military experience so much that I decided to join the Regiment full-time and make it my career.’ During his time in the Regiment, Fitzgerald deployed to numerous locations, including Afghanistan, Cyprus, Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo, Northern Ireland and Portugal, but the Falkland Islands hold a much cherished memory for him. He said:

The Falkland Islands was a particular favourite of mine; it is a truly unique location. I was sent on a posting in late 1994 which fell over Christmas. In those days we didn't have the luxury of the internet, we were all given telephone cards to phone home. I remember that a card would only last nine minutes to Gibraltar, but it was during one of my calls home that I first heard my one-year-old son Nicholas talk, it was a very special moment when he said 'Daddy' for the first time.

Fitzgerald was commissioned in 2009 and he ended his military career as the Regiment's Second-in-Command in 2015.

Another warrant officer who deployed to Afghanistan in 2007 was Warrant Officer Class 2 Coleing, who took up the appointment of duty operations watch keeper at the Joint Operations Centre (JOC) in Camp Bastion. In the absence of the battle group's commander Coleing, as duty watch keeper, was required to react to unforeseen situations. The JOC controlled all major assets ranging from Close Air Support from multinational fighter jets to medical evacuations or dealing with the international media. The battle group consisted of 1st Battalion Royal Anglian with an attached Estonian armoured infantry company and a Danish reconnaissance squadron, bringing the battle group to over 1,500 personnel.

In the meantime, Major Ivor Lopez and Warrant Officer Class 1 John Paul Payas formed part of the United Kingdom Leadership Training Team where they held the posts of Company Commander and Regimental Sergeant Major, respectively. Over the preceding few years both men had worked extensively with foreign armies and within training establishments. This was an opportunity to use this experience to train and develop the future military commanders of the Afghan National Army (ANA). The provision of direct support to the Afghan National Army was one of NATO's most important military tasks in the region as an effective Afghan National Army was the key to building a self-sufficient Afghanistan. The students were put through their paces throughout a 23-week course, culminating in a counterinsurgency package. The course was modelled on the British Army officer commissioning course at Sandhurst and was designed to develop the qualities of leadership, character and intellect demanded of an officer. Major

Ivor Lopez and Warrant Officer Class 1 John Paul Payas were based at Camp Alamo near Kabul. The camp was situated a few kilometres east of the capital on the road to Jalalabad, with most of the training taking place in open areas extending several kilometres to the north. A significant threat existed against coalition forces and the Afghan National Army in that area. As a consequence, training teams had the dual role of protecting themselves and the students while conducting the training. Commenting on the training Major Lopez said, ‘It was a peculiar situation to be in; the team was trying to deliver training and at the same time being conscious of the fact that it is in a dangerous and hostile situation.’

Back in Gibraltar the remainder of the Regiment continued to train and conduct ceremonial duties and carry out its operational role but jointly with these tasks there was an emphasis on involving the families and the population of Gibraltar in the new world that the Regiment was operating in. In September 2007 an open day was held. The central hub for the event was the Buffadero Training Centre, and it also encompassed the training area at Windmill Hill Flats. The theme was linked to operations and overseas exercises. The message was clear: at a time when the Regiment was no longer solely engaged in the defence of the Rock and overseas training, but actual war fighting, it was imperative that the population was informed about the new roles that members of the Regiment would adopt when on operations.

The year 2008 saw more deployments to war zones. Not all of them were characterised purely by fighting: Major Marcello Sanguinetti, a member of the Reserve, deployed to Kabul between September and December as part of the UK Leadership Training Team; Lance Corporal Jason Canepa, who deployed with 1st Battalion Royal Fusiliers between June and November 2008 (Telic 12) had a busy time spending his days carrying out operations, providing force protection and manning the Forward Operating Base ‘Minden’. However, he was also chosen, together with four other individuals, to provide close protection to a team of archaeologists who wanted to visit Babylon and other important sites. Canepa remembers this time vividly: ‘We got our own helicopter and we spent two days visiting the sites. We even got our own private tours by the archaeologists!’ But, clearly, there was more to his deployment, and, for his involvement in a specific operation he was awarded a GOC (General Officer Commanding) commendation. This Telic probably saw the largest deployment of RG soldiers, with more than 20 being able to experience Iraq. The men were split up and integrated into X Company and mainly Y and Z Companies. Private Matthew Bruce–Smith, who served in X Company, summed up his experiences stoically: ‘Nothing went on, really, only the camp was getting rocketed’. Corporal Lance Mauro, who also was on this deployment, remembered that after the pre-deployment training with 1 Fusiliers in Germany they were thrown in at the deep end when they arrived: They did not have time to acclimatise and they went straight into patrolling. A little less stoically, but still with a stiff upper lip, he summed up the tour with the words, ‘it was a lot of walking’. Lieutenant Tim Cumming remembered that this deployment was a particular challenge for him and the men from Gibraltar, because the Regiment was operating in a light infantry role, while the Fusiliers were a heavy infantry unit equipped with Warrior armoured fighting vehicles. Accordingly, the Gibraltarians, including Corporals John Pincho and Paul Tinkler and Privates Gino Warren, Karim Aouhar, Tarron Bentley, Sean Caruana and Shane Moreno, had to adapt quickly to the new situation and the new equipment. In order to do this, they were attached to the Fusiliers at an early stage. In total, they all spent nearly a year with the Fusiliers. Before their deployment, they underwent pre-deployment training with the unit in Germany, mainly in Fallingbostel. One of the highlights of the pre-deployment training was the time spent in the training area Hohenfels, where the entire battle group took part in live-firing exercises.

A demonstration of how to deal with terrorists was part of the Open Day 2007.

It nearly fits. Regimental Open Day, 2007.

Weapons show at the Regimental Open Day, 2007.

Lieutenant Cumming leading his Warrior back to Camp Delta in the COB, Telic 12.

Lieutenant Cumming ready to move out with his Warrior, Telic 12.

Lieutenant Cumming with his gunner Fusilier Grenfel, Telic 12.

Lieutenant Tim Cumming with his strike team, Telic 12.

Lieutenant Cumming on a border patrol, Telic 12.

Perez Bronze Star

Major John Perez MBE, Second-in-Command of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment was awarded the American Bronze Star award for meritorious service in a high-intensity combat zone during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He served in Iraq between January and August 2004. The award was announced in the Operational Honours List on Friday 9 September 2005.

Major John Perez was awarded an American Bronze Star Award for his services whilst serving as a forward operator alongside American forces in Iraq. He was the Officer Commanding a 300-strong Coalition Military Advisory Team in a training camp north of Baghdad under the constant threat of daily bombardment and hostile action. His team consisted of British, American, Australian and Jordanian forces and was involved training the new Iraqi Army to support coalition operations around Baghdad, often in dangerous situations. Additionally, he remains the only British officer to have led a United States Marine Corps unit in Iraq. He was further responsible for setting up the Iraqi Intervention Force and providing tactical instruction to that force in order to fight alongside the US Marines within the Sunni Triangle around Baghdad. He conducted on-the-ground advice and evaluations to guide the Iraqi forces to success. The medal was presented in Washington in the presence of the United States Marine Corps. The Queen has granted him the unique privilege to wear his award, which was conferred to him by the President of the United States of America.

John Perez, here as Lieutenant-Colonel during his tenure as Commanding Officer of the Regiment 2006–09.

Lieutenant Cumming stayed with Y Company throughout Telic 12. This unit was the strike company, and was also used as quick reaction force for the Special Forces. When the unit arrived in theatre, they took over from the Scots Guards and were the only UK strike force element in the British sector. Lieutenant Cumming started his tour as Second-in-Command of the company and strike team commander. While in theatre, he qualified as Warrior commander and gunner. During his tour, Cumming also worked together with military transition teams and in this role he was deployed to central Basra, identifying potential extraction routes for the teams. The Iraq experience was not the only deployment for Cumming. From October 2012 to April 2013 he deployed to Afghanistan with an intelligence unit which provided him with experiences very different from Iraq, but no less interesting or valuable. While in Iraq, Cumming's company worked on a four-day cycle: strike operation quick reaction force, followed by counter-IED patrols followed by lethal aid interdiction operations. His platoon was also on alert for airborne operations that might become necessary.

Corporal John Pincho with his new friend, Telic 12.

Also in Y Company on Telic 12, Corporal Pincho acted as a section commander in 1 Platoon. One incident that Corporal Pincho clearly remembers was the time when volunteers were needed for force protection for an engineers' unit building a police station. He stepped forward and he spent the next nine days in the centre of Basra under constant sniper threat during the night. During daylight this threat was reduced and Corporal Pincho got to see the sights of Basra as he patrolled the city.

Corporal Pincho and Private Aouhar honing their Enhanced House Assault drills, Telic 12.

Private Warren also had a number of interesting experiences in Iraq. He was in 11 Platoon of Z Company. One of the routine tasks was to go to the Forward Operating Base ‘Minden’, on the Iran–Iraq border, where one could still see abandoned and destroyed vehicles left there during the war between the two countries in the 1980s. One incident that stuck in his mind was when he and his platoon were called in to recover the bodies of 12 US soldiers who had died in a helicopter crash.

Lieutenant John Pitto was commissioned in 2008. In 2011 he went to Cyprus with the Anglians, who were the theatre reserve battalion. However his deployment to Afghanistan was not with the Anglians, but with the Prince of Wales's Royal Regiment (PWRR). So, instead of flying east from Cyprus into theatre, he flew west to Germany to undergo pre-deployment training with the PWRR, deploying with that regiment in September 2011 on Herrick 15. He stayed in Afghanistan until January 2012. He was based in Lashkar Gar and was the commander of a 12-man group tasked with mentoring members of the Afghan National Civil Order Police. Lieutenant Pitto said at the time:

> This task is important in the lead-up to our extraction in 2014. Our main effort is now the mentoring of local troops in order to set the conditions to help NATO leave Afghanistan. By then we expect Afghanistan's own security forces can cope with future threats themselves. The key to successful transition is for us to accept that it must be an Afghan solution to an Afghan problem. This, at times, is difficult but we have done well to persevere with this principle.

After his return he summed up his experiences by saying 'You come from sheltered Gibraltar and suddenly you are in a war!'

FIRST
FUSILIERS

Lance-Corporal Canepa during Operation Sumeria with Z Company, 1 Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, Telic 12.

Patrolling with military transition team in Basra centre – Captain Tim Cumming, Telic 12.

Private Aouhar and Corporal Pincho in Warrior park, Telic 12.

Private Bentley, Corporal Pincho and Private Aouhar during a break in their pre-deployment training in Germany (Hohenfels), Telic 12.

Private Dyron Dalmedo and Lance Corporal Jason Canepa sorting out their Warriors, Telic 12.

Colour Sergeant Grant Smith also deployed to Afghanistan in 2012. In Kabul he held the rank of Acting Warrant Officer Class 2 in order to carry out the duties of the Brigade Sergeant Major in the Non-Commissioned Officer Training Brigade. But, just to make things even more complicated, the job of Brigade Sergeant Major is normally filled by a Warrant Officer Class 1 – so Colour Sergeant Smith was actually working two ranks above his normal role in the Regiment. Working for him were 115 instructors from a range of NATO countries, including the USA, Canada, Turkey and Romania, not to mention many more Afghan military instructors. During his time in the job, over 4,000 members of the Afghan National Army completed career courses. ‘The tour was a fantastic experience,’ Colour Sergeant Smith said:

I have never worked with so many different nations before and, of course, I’ve never worked at WO1 level. In the past my experience has largely been within the Regiment but, out in Afghanistan, I was operating at brigade level – indeed, I was helping to shape a whole army!

On Herrick 16 (April to October 2012) nine members of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment deployed to Afghanistan, once again attached to the Royal Anglian Regiment. Their reputation preceded them, as Corporal Chris Milliken remembers: ‘The CO of the Royal Anglians addressed the battle group at a pre-deployment briefing held at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. There was only one group of soldiers that he welcomed specifically; and that was the bunch of Gibraltar soldiers. Not because we had volunteered, but because of our good reputation’. The trust had been earned by the men on earlier deployments with the Anglians and their attitude and professionalism was no different now in 2012. All nine of the soldiers ended up in the top third of the unit’s internal ranking. As a result, other units were trying to recruit the soldiers of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment! The reputation of the Regiment was also obvious from other roles that soldiers from the Rock took on in Afghanistan in that period. Major David King deployed with headquarters 20 Brigade between July 2011 and April 2012 to the headquarters of Task Force Helmand, where he was given the complex and demanding job of SO2 Consequence Manager. Between September 2011 and March 2012, Captain Jamie Allan and Colour Sergeant Keith Dellipiani served at the non-commissioned officers academy in Kabul; Captain Allan as second in command and Colour Sergeant Dellipiani as heavy weapons senior instructor.

John Pitto as a captain, back in Gibraltar.

While the British Army was at war in Iraq and Afghanistan, there were always between 12 and 20 men of the Regiment always out on operation. In the first decade of the new millennium this made the Regiment one of only a very few army units to have an almost constant presence in Afghanistan and Iraq, just under 10 per cent of the Regiment's regular strength deployed. As a proportion of the nation's population, which has stood at approximately 30,000, Gibraltar has been an extremely large per capita contributor to these operations.

The stories and experiences presented here of the individuals on operational deployments differed greatly, however some aspects remain constant: all of the members of the Regiment who went on operations and into war zones were driven by the will to succeed and to enhance the reputation of the Regiment within the wider British Army. This mission has been accomplished.

Private Tarron Bentley waiting on the flight-line for his move out by Merlin, Telic 12.

Private Tarron Bentley on patrol near Azubaya, Telic 12.

Downs Mentioned in Despatches

Private Liam Downs was 24 and on his first operational tour of Afghanistan in 2012 (during Herrick) when his actions won him a Mention in Despatches, one of the oldest forms of recognition for gallantry within the British Armed Forces.

Private Downs had joined 1st Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment Anglians in Pirbright in October 2011 for pre-deployment training for

Afghanistan. He joined 1 Platoon of A Company, the so-called 'operations company' which conducted flexible operations and disrupted enemy movements. To achieve this, the company was often moved by helicopter.

On 21 June 2012, Private Downs's company deployed from Patrol Base Pimon in Nad 'Ali on a mission to disrupt a notorious enemy safe haven. The insurgents in this area were a particularly aggressive group, well-armed veterans with years of fighting experience.

As Private Downs and his patrol pressed forward they came under heavy fire from an isolated compound. Though sheltered, they only had minutes before the insurgents would outflank them and the only escape was to cross open ground for better cover. Private Downs volunteered to climb the roof of the compound in order to provide covering fire and so soon became the focus for the enemy. Undeterred, he pressed on to the top and, from the folds of the roof, he raked the insurgent positions some 300 metres away with return fire.

This allowed his platoon to cross 200 metres of open ground to safety so they could provide cover for his withdrawal. He said:

> I got onto the roof for a better viewing position and, with a machine gun, I was able to overwhelm the insurgents' four positions. When I look back now it seems a stupid thing to do, but that's the job, and the other gunners were doing the same job as me throughout the tour as far as I'm concerned.

The junior soldier again demonstrated his selfless courage on 29 July 2012 while on patrol north of Checkpoint Qudrat. Within half an hour of deploying, the patrol was engaged from at least three firing points in a well coordinated attack. His unit was pinned down by enemy fire in a semi-open terrain with several buildings approximately 150 metres apart.

Disregarding his own safety, Private Downs positioned himself in an unprotected firing position and in the enemy's sights to draw their fire. From this position he began suppressing the insurgent positions; this enabled the patrol to start moving again and cross the semi-open terrain. As a consequence of his suppressive fire his patrol gained the upper hand in the fight. His citation reads:

> Private Downs has been the stand-out soldier in the Nad 'Ali Operations Company. Downs' performance, especially when in the most difficult situations, was as outstanding as it was consistent and exceeded all expectations. He inspired confidence in those around him, invariably placing himself in the most danger to protect his comrades.

Private Downs, originally from Huntingdon in Cambridgeshire, but now living in Gibraltar, joined the Army after losing his job as a furniture fitter in Spain. He explained:

I was talking to my dad about coming back to the UK to join the Army, and he told me there was an Army careers office in Gibraltar and that I should go and see what it's all about. I did and I was recruited.

Private Downs said: 'I am ecstatic about the honour, and it's good for my regiment to be noticed.' His main lesson from his experiences in Afghanistan was: 'Never underestimate your enemy'.

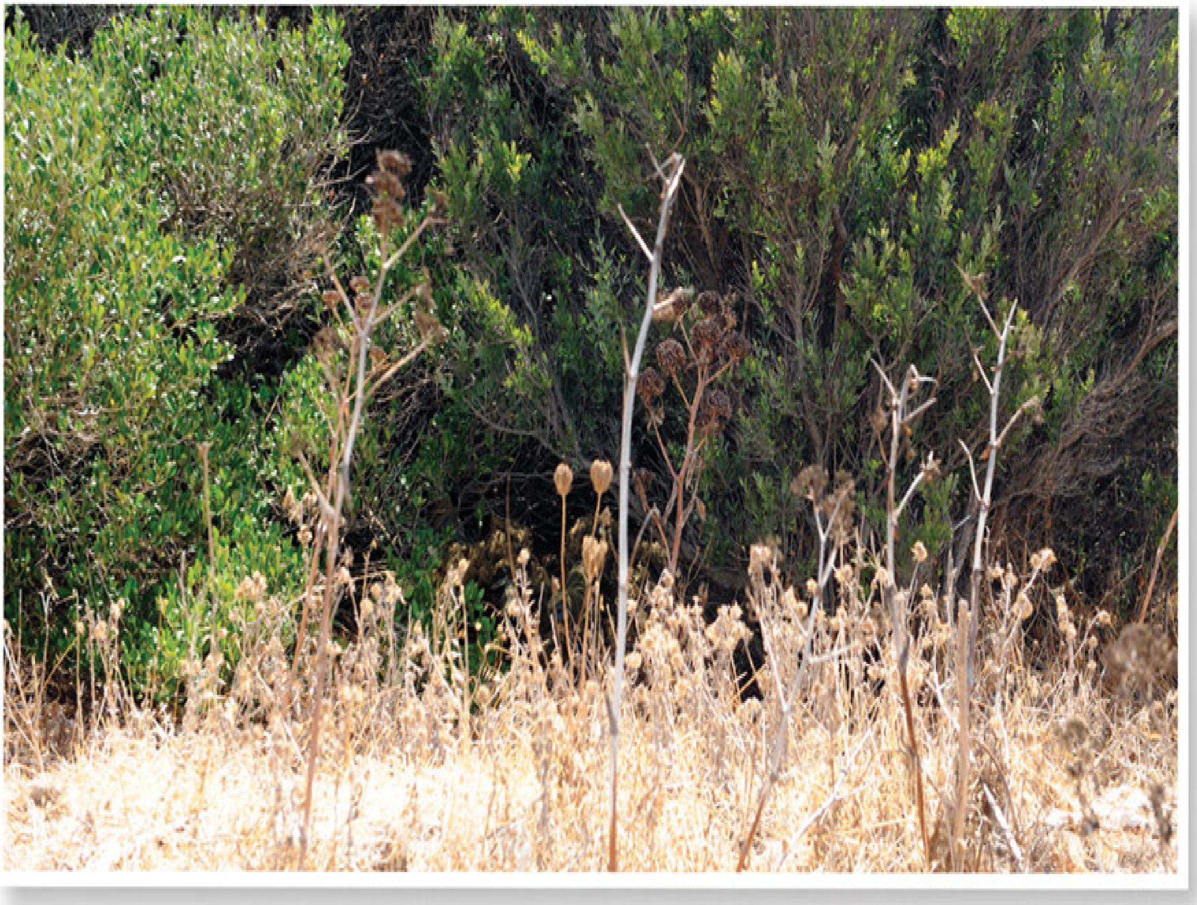
X Company on patrol, Telic 12.

EXERCISES AND DEFENCE ENGAGEMENT

Deployments on operations were a new challenge for the Regiment, however, while soldiers served in the deserts of Iraq and Afghanistan, the Regiment continued to fulfil its roles as the resident battalion in Gibraltar. Training in Gibraltar itself continued frequently, often in cooperation with the civil emergency services or other components of the armed forces. Every inch of Gibraltar's 3½ square miles of land is used, as well as its territorial waters. Due to the terrain of Gibraltar the Regiment has tended to emphasize FIBUA (Fighting In Built-Up Areas), internal security and operations in tunnels and caves (OTAC or tunnel warfare) in training. As facilities in Gibraltar are limited the Regiment has been required to train abroad in order to achieve the Director of Infantry's mandated training standards.

Following on from Exercise Grand Prix in Kenya (a dismounted infantry battle group exercise) the Regiment's G Company was preparing to face a different challenge in 1999 – taking part in arguably the biggest exercise in the British Army. These exercises are regularly held at the British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS) in Canada; the location could not have been more different to Kenya. The Queen's Dragoon Guards was to participate in Exercise Medicine Man. Members of the Gibraltar Regiment had trained in BATUS for the first time in 1993, when a section deployed with 2 Royal Anglians. Now, in 1999, the input from the Rock was stronger: the company involved was Chindit Company from 1st King's Own Border Regiment, reinforced by a platoon from the Royal Gibraltar Regiment. The training was divided over two phases covering 31 days. Phase 1 was the live-firing phase and it progressed from live-firing exercises to full-grown battle-group exercises with tanks, artillery, engineers and other assets in support. Phase 2 was a tactical engagement simulation exercise (TESEX) phase.

The sniper, a very valuable asset, 2013.



Good camouflage is essential for the sniper.

Medical training on the Rock, 2013.

The TESEX system uses lasers and receptors to simulate actual incoming fire. All personnel and vehicles are fitted with receptors and have lasers fitted to their weapons system. In the Warrior armoured fighting vehicle the radios are also wired into the system so that audible tones can indicate hits and near misses. The equipment boasts many advanced technical features, such as being able to calculate to within 2 centimetres where the user was hit and which weapon system achieved the kill. The system is designed in such a way that, for example, it is impossible to ‘destroy’ a tank with a small arms weapon. The introduction of TESEX has resulted in the most realistic battlefield training available. When the laser hits a person he/she opens a sealed envelope which indicates what type of injury has been sustained. After this the medics arrive on the scene and give first aid. Casualty evacuation is then undertaken – it is not just the fighting men who are exercised but all the sub-units in the battle group.

At the end of a strenuous month-long exercise the men were offered a comprehensive three-week adventure training exercise. This consisted of three five-day packages out of a choice of seven. These included free-fall parachuting, white water rafting, Canadian canoeing, caving, trekking, mountain cycling, alpine and ski mountaineering, top roping and abseiling, expeditions on horseback and multi-pitch climbing. These activities were organised from the foothills of the Canadian Rocky Mountains and all those who attended felt it was an experience of a lifetime.

Physical fitness is a mandatory requirement for any infantryman.

Obstacle course, 2013.

Amphibious training in Gibraltar, 2002.

Recruits on the Combat Infantryman’s course at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick.

Drill at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick.

The exercise had been extremely challenging and for many it was the first time they had experienced operating within a battle group with all the supporting arms coming into play and in a training area that was seemingly endless.

An interesting development in training occurred shortly after, in 2000, when the unit deployed at battalion level to an overseas training exercise (OTX) in Cyprus. This was the first OTX at this level other than to UK. It was a ‘one off’, not part of a programmed series of exercises, which meant that it had to be staffed from scratch including movement orders and logistics. This gave the Second-in-Command, Major David Seed, and the Quartermaster Major Alan Sheridan, the prime movers, their share of problems but to their credit the move and deployment was a complete success. It was also the first time that the Regiment went to train together as a battalion; members of G Company (the regular element) trained together with members of I and B Company (the territorial element) and the Headquarters Company which was composed of regulars and territorials. G Company had been deployed to the UK to undertake part of their training before joining the rest of the battalion in Cyprus. The Regiment deployed to Bloodhound Camp where the first week was spent on company-level training, followed by a three-day battalion training exercise including the use of support helicopters and landing craft. Both regular and Territorial Army members took part in the exercise who, during the rest period, took advantage of a chartered ferry to visit Egypt! Headquarters British Forces Cyprus thought that it was impossible to do, but they had not allowed for the TA travel agents and insurance brokers in the unit!

Exercise Medicine Man, Canada 1999.

In line with a policy of enhancing the profile and image of the unit within the wider infantry community, the CO, Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Brancato, set out a policy for the unit to enter, and hopefully win a few, premier infantry skills competitions. One such event was the Cambrian Patrol, which is held annually in the harsh and unforgiving environment of Brecon Beacons in Wales. This is an infantry patrols competition in which teams from all nations compete across a range of infantry skills over a gruelling 48 hours. The Regiment distinguished itself in 2000 and 2001 by winning the gold and silver medal, respectively. The final attempt in 2009 gave the Regiment another two silver medals, with one of the teams narrowly missing out on the gold medal. It might just be a coincidence that some of the troops that had taken part in Cambrian Patrol were chosen for the next deployment: in January 2002, Lieutenant David King, Sergeant John-Paul Payas and Privates Lance Joseph Mauro, Keith Dellipiani and Patrick Canepa spent six weeks in the Caribbean, first in Bermuda and then in Jamaica, where they taught basic infantry skills and supported an exercise.

Two years earlier, in 2000, the Regiment had sent to Sierra Leone a party that was attached to 1st Battalion Light Infantry. The Gibraltar contingent consisted of Sergeant Alex Stone, Sergeant Richard Herbert, Sergeant Ian Martinez and Corporal Keiron Alvarez. They spent four months in Sierra Leone doing training packages with the Sierra Leone army. During their time they were stationed in ‘Gibraltar Barracks’ – what could have been more fitting! It was a very interesting time. The Lomé Peace Accord had been signed in 1999, giving the (false) hope that hostilities had come to an end for good. As a consequence, one of the tasks that had to be carried out was the integration of former rebels into the army and amalgamating rebel and regular army units.

Three years after his time in Sierra Leone, Alex Stone, now colour sergeant, packed his bags again: he was posted to Northern Ireland as permanent staff with the Royal Irish Rangers. He spent the years 2003 to 2006 in Northern Ireland and in that time he built a reputation as a sniper. His name travelled as far as Lithuania, because he was asked by the Lithuanian army to run sniper courses for their army. All this did not do him any harm: after his return from Northern Ireland, be became, amongst other things, Sergeant Major of G Company and in 2015 he received his commission.

As has been seen, sending troops from Gibraltar to be trained in the UK was not a new development, but from around 1991 it was put on a more constant and sustainable footing. Every year the regular element of the Regiment deployed on exercise Jebel Jadeed to the UK for a period of four weeks. During the first two weeks the troops completed all stage 1–5 shooting and also took advantage of the vast training areas to practise and test all the sub-units in conventional warfare. In the last two weeks they then usually moved to specialist training areas and conducted intensive training packages, including FIBUA, internal security and public order training. The Reservist element also deployed to the UK for its 15-day camp to carry out its mandated training, this exercise was known as Jebel Kabeer. During the time abroad the regular element were relieved by a regular company from the UK, which carried out duties in Gibraltar.

In 2006, the two exercises were combined under the name Jebel Tarik which from now on formed one of the highlights in the annual training cycle. The training areas used by the Regiment differed in accordance with the requirements placed upon the Regiment. Mandatory weapon handling skills were trained and tested on the ranges at Hythe in Kent, while the second phase of the training took place in different locations, and very often in Sennybridge.

Since 1999, the Regiment has also carried out training on the Stanford Training Area (STANTA) near Thetford. For young men brought up in Gibraltar, STANTA offered many challenges. ‘We never need to use a map back in Gibraltar – the place is so small that we know every street’, said Major Collado when interviewed in 2006. ‘Here in Thetford it’s easy for the soldiers to get lost in the middle of a wood at night. They have learned how to rely on their map and compass. We simply don’t have this much space back home.’ He summed up the Company’s time on STANTA, ‘We’ve achieved all our aims and I go back to Gibraltar a happy man.’

In 2011, the regular component of the Regiment again deployed to the rifle ranges in Kent under the Officer Commanding, Major Juri Williamson. The ranges, run by the training cell under Warrant Officer Class 2 James Gracia and his training team, consisted of both static and moving targets designed to test the troops in all applications of firing, and from individual to group-sized practices. The exercises tested the personal drills of each individual as well as command and control of the platoon when under pressure. The men of Tarik Company soon found themselves firing at all manner of targets, running from cover to cover on individual battle ranges, fighting in sections of eight in the attack, and as a platoon of nearly 30, from purpose-designed buildings much like the forward operating bases used in Afghanistan. Warrant Officer Class 2 Gracia said:

Jebel Tarik 2008 at Sennybridge, I Company: the basics are covered.

The aim is not only to test the troops but, within safety limits, to create as much realism in the training as possible. There was a lot of hard work put in from the men trying to gain as much as possible from the ranges and making up for lost time. This year, for the first time, we introduced simulation ammunition. Nothing has ever given our training this level of realism, allowing the troops the ability to see how their skills, drills and tactics work against a real enemy, where both sides are capable of shooting each other.

After ten days of intensive firing on Lydd and Hythe ranges, Tarik Company moved to South Wales for phase two of the exercise. Back in the home of infantry training, the RG troops practised their platoon- and company-level attacks. As the regular soldiers left Folkestone, the regiment's TA troops arrived: 'We are fortunate to be here,' said the Officer Commanding B Company, Major Tito Danino.

'This training is not only mandated but imperative, and without it the company's quality line would not be the same.' Nations have long realized we can no longer work in isolation, and by building these relationships we become better educated and stronger for it. These joint exercises also increase our experience as soldiers and officers. This Exercise gives our Soldiers and Officers the ability to reach a new standard by training in an environment which is unusual to them, and conditions which they are not used to. This will help create Soldiers and Officers who are more adaptable and able to operate within the mission specific framework of our British counterparts.

The year 2000 saw a further extension in the development in exercises, resulting in the Regiment carrying out military training in Morocco. As often happens this came about in a rather unorthodox manner. Her Majesty's ambassador in Rabat asked for the Regimental Band to take part in his Queen’s Birthday reception. The band was not available so the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Brancato, deployed the Corps of Drums instead. It was a huge success and at the tail end of a resounding reception the ambassador asked the Commanding Officer what he might want in return. ‘To conduct military training in Morocco’ was the sharp answer. The ambassador was true to his word and the following year the Regiment deployed on ferries direct from Gibraltar to Casablanca and down to Ram Ram training area near Marrakech. It was a modest exercise, fraught with logistical challenges but the possibilities were enormous.

The Commanding Officer had set two aims for this second deployment, which he passed on to Major John Perez who had just taken over G Company. These were to conduct high-tempo, arduous company-level live and dry training, and to carry out defence diplomacy and integrate 2 Para Brigade, the Regiment’s hosts in Morocco, by carrying out joint training and providing short courses for them. 2 Para Brigade had been exemplary hosts and this approach bonded the two units. Major Perez took on the challenge with his typical enthusiasm and G Company achieved all their allotted aims; and more importantly the series of exercises, now named Jebel Sahara, continued as an essential feature of the training calendar. The success of the exercise is summed up in an after-action report from 2001:

For the second consecutive year, G Coy, 1 RG, successfully conducted an exercise in conjunction with the 2eme Brigade d’Infanterie de Parachutistes, the spearhead unit of the Moroccan Army. The aim of the exercise was to practise and develop the Company in conventional warfare in demanding conditions. The aim was certainly achieved, with the added bonus of giving our soldiers experience of working in an arid environment. The Company worked from Ram Ram, 10km north of Marrakech.

James Gracia, here as captain and Adjutant of the Regiment.

The first part of the 2001 programme was Exercise Tarik Challenge, a three-day exercise which concentrated on offensive operations. G Company had two new challenges to face: first was the climate. Coming from Gibraltar the soldiers were used to exercising in high temperatures but the heat of Ram Ram training area took some getting used to! The second challenge was working so closely with soldiers of a foreign army. The Moroccans were very keen and hardworking, but they had trained to a completely different doctrine and they spoke a different language. Despite this the final company attack went well and set the pace for the rest of the exercise. During these attacks both sides saw for the first time how much the units could learn from each other.

After Exercise Tarik Challenge the units were split into five different training programmes. The company's sniper cadre which began in Gibraltar took ten soldiers with no experience of sniping to a good initial level of skills – the cadre then continued its training in the UK. The second team trained for the Cambrian Patrol event, with two Moroccan non-commissioned officers attached. Programme three consisted of a cross-training programme with the Moroccan brigade, run by the Regiment's Operations Officer. There was a package based on field firing qualifications for Moroccan officers and senior non-commissioned officers. Finally, the remainder of G Company formed a platoon with a Moroccan section attached, whose training was the exercise's main effort.

The platoon's training consisted of various ranges using all company weapons and an extensive field firing package. The training area was ideally suited to field firing. Although the ground consisted of hard rock, the remote location and the surrounding mountains meant that there was very little restriction on the arcs of fire. As a result the Regiment managed to conduct some very realistic live-firing exercises. Different doctrine sometimes confused both the members of the Regiment and the Moroccans, and the British commanders at all levels were tested thoroughly on their command abilities, trying to control not only their own men, but also attached Moroccan troops, who did not speak English. Their communication problems were overcome with patience, control measures and the small smatterings of French possessed by members of the Regiment. Luckily, two of the Regiment's soldiers, Private Smith and Private M'Saouri spoke Arabic. As the report by the Regiment states 'They probably wished they had kept that quiet, as they were run off their feet trying to help out with all the separate groups at once!' The exercise was considered a great success.

Jebel Sahara, 2002.

Joint and combined warfare in Morocco, Jebel Sahara, 2004.

Live firing, Jebel Sahara, 2004.

There was, however, a sad event during the exercise, when Private Christian Wink had a fatal traffic accident on 24 September 2001. He was later buried with full military honours. G Company provided the pall bearers and firing party, and the Corps of Drums provided the bugle.

The Regiment's report on the exercise finished by saying that 'already plans are being made for Exercise Jebel Sahara, with the prospect of exploiting other training areas in the High Atlas Mountains.' Little did the Regiment know that Exercise Jebel Sahara was to become a highly prestigious exercise that would still be running over a decade later. The exercise provided important and useful training opportunities not only for the Royal Gibraltar Regiment and its Moroccan counterparts, but also for the other British Army units that have taken part in the exercise under the leadership of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment. It also fulfilled a vital role in the area defence engagement. The military value of the exercise becomes clear very quickly when one looks at the terrain in Morocco. The country has been described by the Royal Gibraltar Regiment as 'the ideal training area'. Within a few miles it is possible to find extremes of climate and terrain, from the freezing snow-capped peaks of the High Atlas Mountains to the unforgiving sands of the Sahara desert. Ram Ram training area, near the southern city of Marrakech, is somewhere between these extremes. The terrain is mountainous and difficult but the heat is that of the Sahara. Perhaps more important, however, is the impact that this exercise has in the area of defence diplomacy and overseas engagement. The combination of military training, cultural awareness and defence diplomacy is a powerful trinity. With the exercise, the Regiment has created influence in North Africa that goes far beyond the military capability and ability of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment.

As a consequence of its success, the exercise grew in size, scope and importance. For instance, in 2010, the exercise involved 180 members of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment, over 200 members of the Joint Helicopter Force (JHF) and 115 members of the Moroccan Deuxieme Brigade d'Infanterie Parachutiste (BIP). As well as having scores of vehicles, the 2010 exercise was supported by eight helicopters of the JHF – five RAF Chinooks and three Lynx helicopters from the Army Air Corps. The Moroccan authorities made huge areas of countryside available for this military training and so the helicopters were an invaluable means of moving both men and equipment. 'The exercise is unique,' said Major Ivor Lopez, the overall exercise controller in 2010, 'The desert, with its high temperatures and rugged terrain, make for some extremely challenging and utterly realistic conditions. We are able to 'live fire' our weapons and we are spoiled for choice when it comes to brilliant locations to train in all the different infantry skills needed in today's counter-insurgency environments.'

The Moroccans being briefed, 2004.

In Ram Ram Camp, 2005.

When you are really tired, you can sleep everywhere... Jebel Sahara, 2005.

The quality of the exercise attracted the attention of senior military officers and in 2009 there were visits from, amongst others, Air Marshal Sir Stuart Peach, the Chief of Joint Operations and Brigadier Richard Dennis, the Director of Infantry. ‘This exercise is an opportunity for the Royal Gibraltar Regiment to hone its skills to the required standard so that it can contribute to current operations,’ said Brigadier Dennis. ‘The relationships that the RG have built with the Moroccans not only guarantees the continuing success of Jebel Sahara but it also gives the Regiment the relevant skills in mentoring other nations’ forces – a skill that is much needed on current operations.’

With the locals, Jebel Sahara, 2005.

Due to the high political importance of the exercise and the resulting links to Morocco, politicians have also been frequent guests to the exercise. For instance, in October 2012, the Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo, spent two days with the Regiment in Africa. Accompanied by the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Colin Risso MC, the Chief Minister was shown around ‘Camp Sidi Bou’, where he met the men and women of the Regiment over lunch and was able to see at first hand the logistical problems which had to be overcome when bringing 140 members of the Regiment out to Morocco. Mr Picardo addressed the Regiment, conveying to them the pride the whole of Gibraltar feels in the work they do, at home, training and when they are operationally deployed as members of the British Army.

Awaiting incoming support, Jebel Sahara, 2006.

Live firing operation, Jebel Sahara, 2006.

The Chief Minister also met with General de Brigade M'Barek Moutaleb of the Deuxieme Brigade d'Infanterie Parachutiste, and Moroccan politicians. Speaking from Marrakesh, the Chief Minister said:

It has been a huge privilege to have been allowed to see the men and women of the Regiment in the training camp in Marrakech and witness the work they do whilst on exercise. I was able to see at first hand the hardships that soldiers experience on these exercises – conditions which I am told are remarkably similar to the terrain in current operational theatres. Moreover, the relationship between the Regiment and their colleagues in the Moroccan army is clearly excellent and a testament to the work of the Commanding Officer of the Regiment, the Officers serving with him and each and every solider deployed on exercise Jebel Sahara this year and in the past. I know I speak for all Gibraltarians when I say that we are all very proud of the Regiment and what they stand for and do.

Similar praise was heard from the Chief Minister after his visit in 2013:

Visiting the Regiment on exercise is one of the highlights of being Chief Minister… The professionalism with which the Regiment conducts itself here in Morocco and the relationships they have fostered with their Moroccan counterparts over many years demonstrates the Regiment’s ability to promote Gibraltar in their own particular way. It also reflects their huge importance as part of the British military establishment and in the projection of British influence abroad.

Brigadier Dennis’s praise in 2009 was shorter, but, in good military fashion, to the point: ‘Jebel Sahara is a first class exercise.’

Ambush! Jebel Sahara, 2010.

The training cycle was thus dominated by three factors: training at home in Gibraltar, in the UK, and in Morocco. Having said this, the Regiment was also engaged in other areas and was able to project influence in more than one way.

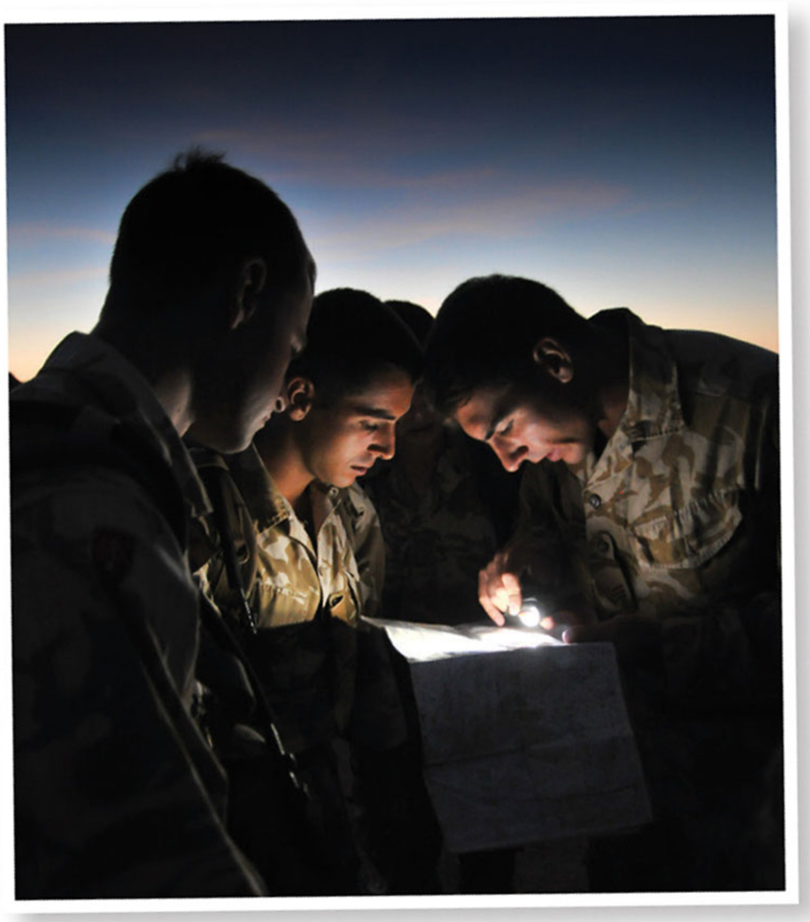
In 2005, the Regiment accepted a commitment in Gambia, which led to a first deployment in 2006. It began as a request for training support from the British defence attaché in Rabat, who is responsible for Mauretania, Senegal, Morocco and the Gambia. It was felt at the time that internationally Africa would be increasing in profile over the coming years and that an enhanced engagement in this part of the world was certainly worth further investigation. Specifically it was requested that the Regiment help train the

Gambians in peace support operations, as they committed a large portion of their army to the UN/African Union mission in Darfur. The first reconnaissance trip to Gambia, carried out by the Commanding Officer and the Regimental Sergeant Major, was a success and the Regiment remained involved in the training mission henceforth.

In 2007, the Regiment sent a team to Nigeria as part of a wider UK presence and this was followed in 2008 by another team that ran a course in Senegal. This course came as a direct result of a Senegalese request that the Regiment should train its senior officers. Some of the soldiers from Gibraltar also gained operational experience in Sierra Leone during the troubles there in 2000–02. Through the defence attaché there were further requests from other countries in North and West Africa, a clear sign that the Regiment's work was appreciated and valued. However, supporting every country in that region would have been too much for the Regiment and, as a consequence, the Regiment concentrated on its existing commitments in Morocco and Gambia. This did not rule out other engagements on a smaller scale, and the Regiment deployed one officer to the joint counter-terrorism adviser team which deployed training teams advising other nations across the globe working in Kenya. The Regiment sent members to take part in the British Army training in Kenya, for instance on Exercise Askari Thunder in 2013. The exercise was a complex infantry training exercise, which brought together elements such as artillery support and observation from unmanned aerial vehicles. The training area provided for the forces was large, varied, and combined with the intense heat it provided a challenge unlike anything available in the UK or Gibraltar.

The Regiment was also able to make use of the language skills of its members, in particular the fact that the vast majority of the Regiment are fluent in Spanish. Thus, shortly before the Regiment's 75th anniversary in 2014, one officer deployed to Chile with the CECOPAC Peace-Keeping Centre upon request of the Army International Branch.

Man down! Jebel Sahara, 2012.



The exercise does not stop at night. Orientating on Jebel Sahara, 2012.

A rather idyllic image, Jebel Sahara, 2012.

Sergeant Raymond Grech, exercise in the field, Kenya, 2007.

The happiest statue in the world, Kenya, 2007.

The praise that the Regiment has earned from other armies was due to a couple of factors; first of all, the teams' clear competence in instructing and passing on their skills, gained on operations, to others. The second factor was the nature of this unique unit, which stems from the distinctive nature of Gibraltar. In Gibraltar, people are brought up with a great degree of cultural awareness in a community where faith and race are greatly respected. As Lieutenant-Colonel Perez said in 2004, he always had to smile at the observation that in Gibraltar 'we have a Roman Catholic Chief Minister, an Anglican Governor, a Hindu speaker of parliament and a Jewish Mayor! Gibraltarians make genuine and friendly soldiers, patient instructors and, by their nature, excellent diplomats!'

CEREMONIAL DUTIES

Having initiated the Jebel Sahara series of exercises the focus now changed to a major development on the ceremonial front. The idea of carrying out public duties at Buckingham Palace was floated in 2000. At this stage in the Regiment's development the concept was seen as a realistic and achievable objective. It would be a fitting tribute not only to the Regiment but to Gibraltar as a whole and it would show that the Regiment had 'come of age' on the biggest 'stage' possible – Buckingham Palace in the heart of London.

But how to go about it? No one was offering slots in the public duties roster even though it is well known that any unit on public duties would welcome a few weeks' respite. Fortuitously, Gibraltar's previous Governor, Sir Richard Luce had just taken over as Lord Chamberlain and was therefore the man responsible for running the Queen's Household. Through the auspices of the then Honorary Colonel, John Porral (and with the full support of Headquarters British Forces), the Regiment took the indirect approach and contacted the Lord Chamberlain to make the request, perhaps circumventing somewhat the chain of command. The word came back; 'the Regiment has been allocated two weeks in March [2001] by the express wish of the Monarch herself'! That was almost the easy bit, now the work had to begin.

Captain Daniel Romero providing tactics training in Senegal in May 2008.

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The team in Senegal, May 2008, from left Captain David King, Major Andrew Bonfante, Major Ivor Lopez and Captain Daniel Romero.

Sergeant Alex Stone overseeing weapons drill in Sierra Leone.

The Adjutant, Captain Andrew Bonfante and the Regimental Sergeant Major Stu Aitkin were at the forefront. The RSM, although a para, and probably horrified at the prospect of drill and ceremonial duty, rose to the occasion magnificently. They had to select personnel, and familiarize themselves with the parade and procedures not only at Buckingham Palace, but also at St James's Palace and the Tower of London and then prepare parade instructions and rehearsal schedules. The Quartermaster's department was also kept busy with a myriad of logistical issues including dress and equipment, accommodation, feeding and transport. The guards would be wearing new scarlet uniforms and Kitchener helmets which had been donated by the government of Gibraltar, and which incidentally would make the Regiment the first unit outside the Guards Division to wear scarlet uniforms and the grey foul weather coats.

Exercise Askari Thunder, 2013.

Following extensive rehearsals in Gibraltar the guards deployed to RAF Uxbridge. There they worked to sort out the final preparations for the first ‘mount’ on 2 March 2001. It was a bitterly cold morning when they paraded outside Wellington Barracks to be greeted by HE the Governor and Commander-in-Chief Sir David Durie after which the Guard marched off into regimental history, but not without a sense of humour. As the Corps of Drums entered the grounds of Buckingham Palace they struck up that perennial local favourite ‘Gachi, Gachi, Gachi’ – to the great delight of the troops marching behind.

Overall it was an unforgettable two weeks with countless anecdotes, girls throwing bits of paper with their telephone numbers on them into the sentry box of the soldiers on guard outside St James’s Palace; the cheers and applause of the families and countless numbers of Gibraltarians, many of them students, who turned up to support their soldiers; the eerie stillness of the Tower during the Ceremony of the Keys; the Queen Mother, Prince Charles and other members of the Royal Family popping in and chatting to the men while on duty. One highlight was undoubtedly the photograph taken of the guard and the complete back-up team with HM the Queen in the interior of the palace just below the Grand Staircase. Although all were nervous and apprehensive, she quickly put everyone at ease, speaking to the guard about her 1952 visit to Gibraltar, asking how they were enjoying themselves and commenting how happy she was to see them there – at those words everyone felt that their hard work had been more than worthwhile. But this was not all the praise that the Regiment received. When the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Brancato, reported to the Major General in charge of the London District at the end of the tour, the General shook Brancato’s hand and that of the Regiment’s Regimental Sergeant Major and told them that the Regiment was the best non-Guards unit that he had seen on public duties – praise indeed from a Guards officer!

The tour was a complete success, borne out by the fact that it did not long remain the Regiment’s only tour of public duties in London. In April 2012, now under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Risso, the Regiment returned to guard the Queen once more. This was, of course, not any year, but HM the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, so that the world’s attention rested on the Regiment even more than it had done during its first public duties tour. On Monday, 16 April, the Royal Gibraltar Regiment took over from the Coldstream Guards at the famous Changing of the Guard ceremony at Buckingham Palace. Fifty children from St Anne’s Middle School in Gibraltar were in the huge crowd that gathered to watch the ceremony as the Royal Gibraltar Regiment Band led the regiment’s detachment out of Wellington Barracks, in through the huge gates of Buckingham Palace, and onto the centre of the palace forecourt where they were met by the cheers of the Gibraltar schoolchildren. The RG’s scarlet tunics were a perfect match for those of the waiting Guardsmen but their white Kitchener helmets were in sharp contrast to the black bearskins of the Old Guard. Under the command of the Captain of the Queen's Guard, Major Ivor Lopez, the 40-minute drill parade was immaculate. Once the outgoing guard had marched off, the RG detachment divided into two, with one half marching off with the regimental band to take up sentry duties outside nearby St James's Palace and the other half remaining at Buckingham Palace. For the next two weeks, these two royal palaces, along with the Tower of London, were guarded by the Royal Gibraltar Regiment. Lieutenant-Colonel Colin Risso was clearly impressed:

Lieutenant Williamson with the Colours in London, 2001.

Leaving Buckingham Palace, 2001.

The Royal Gibraltar Regiment with HM the Queen, 2001.

Changing of the Guard outside St James's Palace, 2012.

A slightly tense Warrant Officer Class 1 Payas just before the changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace, 2012.

A semi-relaxed moment in the Tower of London 2012.

We are delighted to be carrying out these prestigious duties at a time when London is the focus for so many high-profile events. And even though I am used to seeing the high standard of turnout and drill delivered by my soldiers, it was still impressive to see them take their place on the forecourt of Buckingham Palace this morning.

In addition to guarding the royal palaces, the Regiment was also responsible for guarding the Crown Jewels at the Tower. Sergeant Major Dean Castrey explained: 'As well as providing two sentries throughout the day, our primary role is to provide a Quick Reaction Force 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Every day we carry out clearance patrols where we look for anything out of the ordinary, such as suspicious packages or tourists where they shouldn't be. In our time there haven't been any incidents, but not long ago a unit found a body washed up on the edge of the Thames by the Tower and it isn't unusual for drunks to try to climb the walls of the Tower during the night. In addition, the Tower of London's Yeomen Warders (often referred to as 'Beefeaters') asked the soldiers to 'interact with the tourists'. In reality this means having their photographs taken several hundred times a day with visitors to this hugely popular venue, which is viewed by up to 15,000 tourists a day! And the off-duty RG soldiers can barely set foot outside their guardroom before they are asked by tourists to pose for pictures, but it does give them the chance to explain (over and over again) that they are from Gibraltar.'

Keeping the tourists happy, Tower of London, 2012.

The duty in the Tower was particularly popular as Corporal Adam Cook explained: ‘I reckon we’ve got the best of the three duties,’ he said. ‘I was on one of the Buckingham Palace parades and I couldn’t wait to get back here. We have more freedom to move around, we get to chat with the tourists and we have an excellent guardroom.’ Corporal Gavin Lane added: ‘We even have our own chef and the food is really good. There are no downsides to this job at all – I can’t fault it!’

In the Tower of London, 2012.

In addition to guarding the Queen and the public duties associated with the palaces, the Regiment has also had chances to show London its artillery heritage. The Headquarters Company fired royal salutes from the Tower of London on several occasions to celebrate the Queen’s birthday. On 21 April 1998, still as the Gibraltar Regiment, the first public duty was performed in London by firing a 62-royal gun salute at the Tower of London (21 for the Queen’s birthday, 20 because the tower is a royal palace, and 21 to follow a tradition in which ships would fire their guns before entering the City of London to show that they were not threatening). This was repeated in 2004, 2009 and 2012, always on 21 April. The Regiment was only the second unit that was given the privilege to fire the Royal Salute from the Tower since the artillery left the tower in 1924. Usually, the salutes are fired by the Honourable Artillery Company.

The gun salutes at the tower were a very special experience for the Headquarter Company and the Regiment, and in particular for all those former members of the Regiment who still felt the gunners’ blood in their veins. This was not the only event in which the Regiment remembered its gunners’ heritage. Gun salutes are of course frequently carried out by the Regiment in Gibraltar, but the Regiment has also fired other salutes in mainland Britain. The Headquarters Company fired a 21-gun salute at Edinburgh Castle at midday, 2 June 2009, to mark the 56th anniversary of the Queen’s coronation and the Regiment’s 70th anniversary. This was the first time that the Royal Gibraltar Regiment performed a royal gun salute in Scotland. The salute was watched by several thousand tourists who were visiting Edinburgh from all parts of the world and the sound of the three 105mm light guns was almost matched by the clicks of the tourists’ cameras. On the stroke of noon, the Battery Commander, Major Eddie Asquez, ordered the first of the 21 rounds to be fired. After a faultless salute, Major Asquez invited the reviewing officer, Lord Hamilton, Scotland’s most senior judge, to inspect the battery. The excellence of the salute was commented on by many of the military officers present, including Brigadier David Thomson, the Honorary Colonel of 105 Regiment Royal Artillery, the unit that traditionally fires Edinburgh’s gun salutes. For Sergeant Major Winston Payas it was a particularly poignant day – it was the last military parade of his 22-year army career which came to an end only a week after the salute. ‘It has been a historic occasion for the Regiment and for me,’ he said, ‘it is a wonderful way to end my time with the Regiment.’

The Guard in the Tower of London, 2012.

Outside the Scottish War Memorial in Edinburgh Castle.

Marching onto the square to fire the guns in Scotland.

The gun salute in Scotland.

The Regimental photograph being taken during the public duties in London, 2012.

Naturally, ceremonial duties continued back in Gibraltar as well, with parades held to celebrate events and present the Regiment to the public. On 3 July 1999 the Regiment held a parade at the Piazza in order to mark the alliance between the Regiment and the Royal Irish Regiment. The pipes and drums of the Royal Irish played as did the Corps of Drums of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment. There were several reasons for the alliance. It cemented the bond that had existed between the Royal Irish Regiment and the Royal Gibraltar Regiment, manifested for instance in the posting of Major Francis Brancato to the Royal Irish as Company Commander between 1996 and 1998. The alliance was also important in historical terms and it reinforced the links with the town of Ballymena, which were born with the evacuation of the Gibraltarians from the Rock to the North Antrim area during the Second World War.

The two outstanding ceremonial events in Gibraltar itself were arguably the celebrations for the 70th and 75th anniversary, in 2009 and 2014, respectively. On 25 April 2009, the Regiment displayed what a local newspaper called ‘its biggest parade in living memory’ to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the formation of the Gibraltar Defence Force. The parade began at 1045 hrs when the Regiment marched on to Casemate Square. On parade were four guards, each of over 40 serving soldiers and officers, plus two guards made up of members of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment Association and, of course, the Regimental Band and Drums.

The parade began with a service of rededication as the Colours had recently been re-embroidered to include the word ‘Royal’. The service was led by the Chaplain General, the Venerable Archdeacon Stephen Robbins, after which the newly rededicated Colours were trooped. His Excellency the Governor inspected the parade and took the salute. Following the parade, the Regiment exercised its Freedom of Gibraltar by marching up Main Street: the salute was taken by the Mayor, Momy Levy, outside Parliament House, and compliments to the Governor were paid as the Regiment passed the Convent. For the march up Main Street, the parade was augmented by former members of the Gibraltar Defence Force, the Gibraltar Regiment and of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment. The Regiment’s four 105mm guns were also be towed through the town.

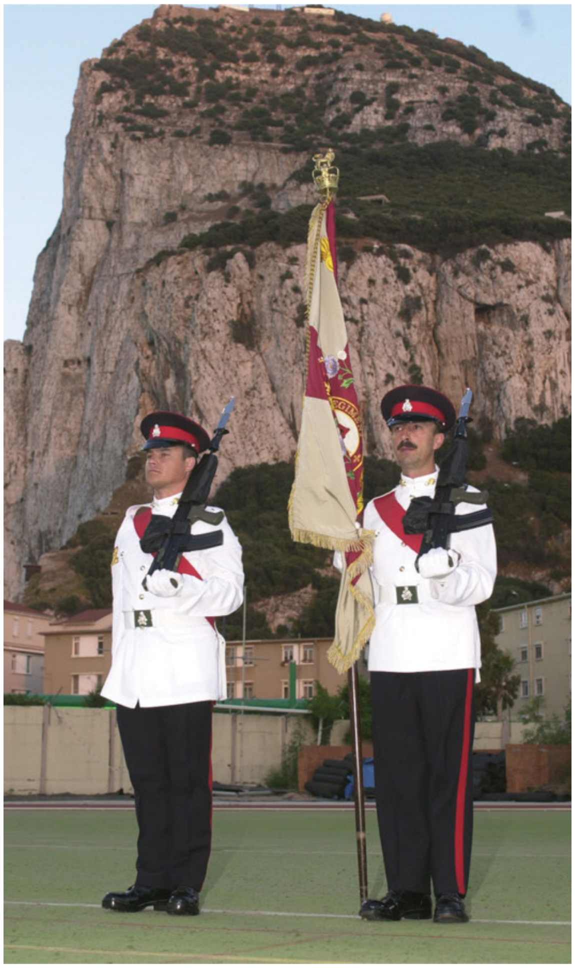
Tower of London tickets
Tower Shop
Toilets

Gun salute in London.

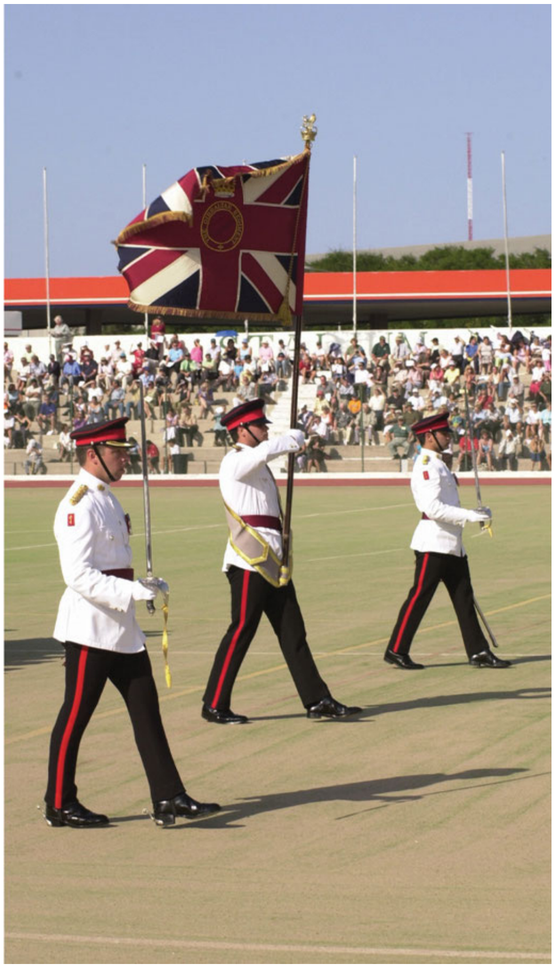
Even though it is only a salute, the noise and flames are impressive, Gibraltar, 2007.

The four 105mm guns firing salute in Gibraltar, 2007.

The Guard outside the Convent, 2007.



The Colours during the Queen’s birthday parade, 2002.



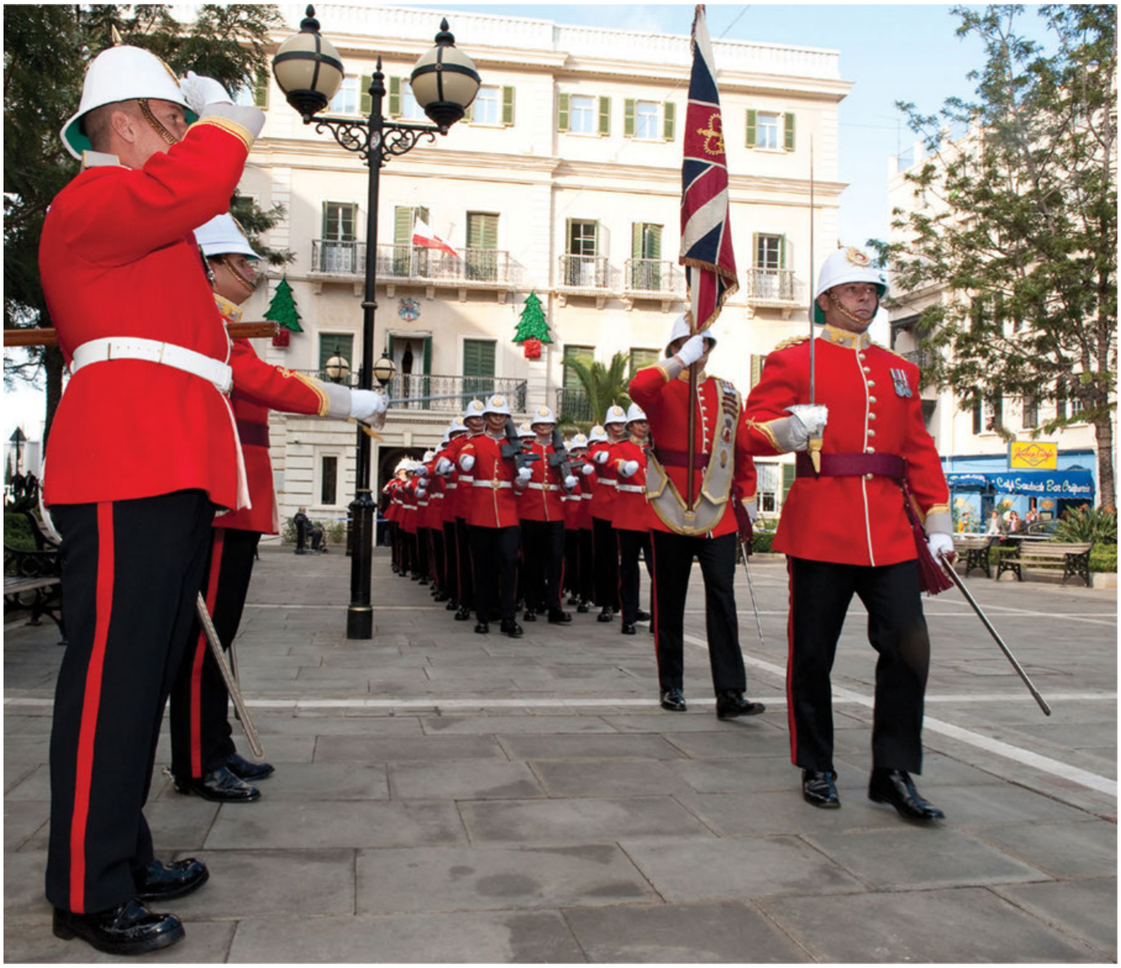
The Colours on parade, 2002.

HRH the Earl of Wessex inspecting the Regiment during the visit to Gibraltar in June 2012.

Lieutenant-Colonel Risso talking to HRH the Countess of Wessex during the visit to Gibraltar in June 2012.

Charity gun pull, Casemates Square 2013. Captain Pitto leading by example!

Last checks and adjustments for the Queen’s birthday parade,
Casemates Square, 2013.



The Regiment on parade for the arrival of the new Governor, Lieutenant-General Sir James Dutton, 2013.

The Queen's birthday parade 2014. The Governor holding the keys and the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Lopez.

The band marches onto Casemates Square at the beginning of the 70th anniversary parade, 2009.

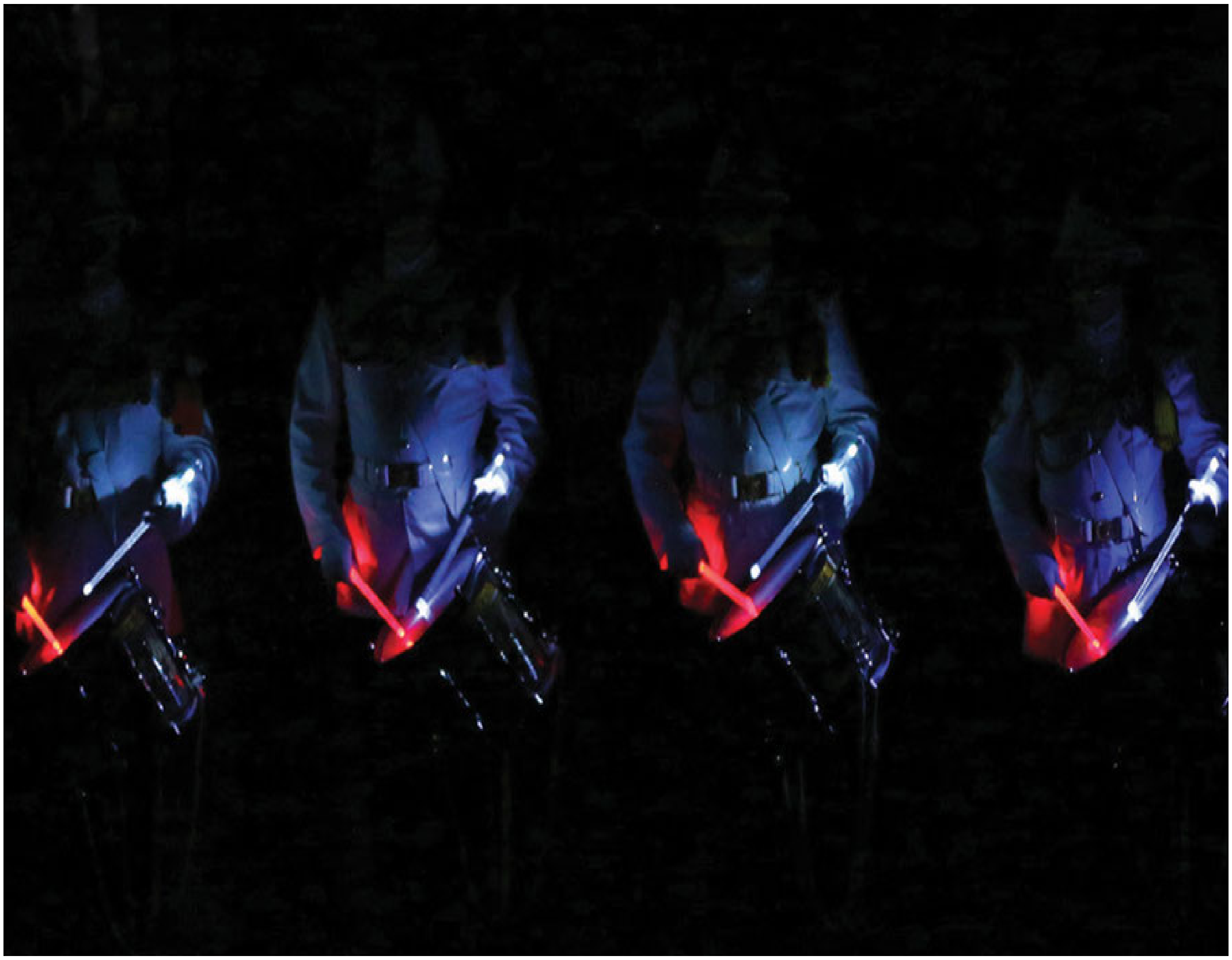
The Regiment on display in Casemates Square during the 70th anniversary celebrations, 2009.

The service of re-dedication, 2009.

The new Colours are lifted up.

The celebrations for the 75th anniversary five years later followed a similar pattern. The parade was held on Saturday, 4 October. It started at Casemates Square at midday and all members of the public were encouraged to come along and support the Regiment as they celebrated their 75th year. The Regiment then exercised its Freedom of the City, just as it had done in 2009. The Regiment marched up Main Street, saluting the Mayor and the Governor. One day later, on 5 October, the Royal Gibraltar Regiment Band performed a charity concert in St Michael's Cave. It was a truly wonderful event. The ambience of the cave was outshone by the musicians' quality. As a particular treat, the Regiment had invited back all former bandmasters who joined the band with their instruments and who each conducted a piece or two. After their time in Gibraltar, the former bandmasters had continued their careers elsewhere within the British Army and had risen high. This in itself was another example of the overall quality of the Gibraltar Regiment, not only on the field of battle, but also in supporting roles.

75th anniversary concert.



The drums putting on a sensational show, 75th anniversary concert.

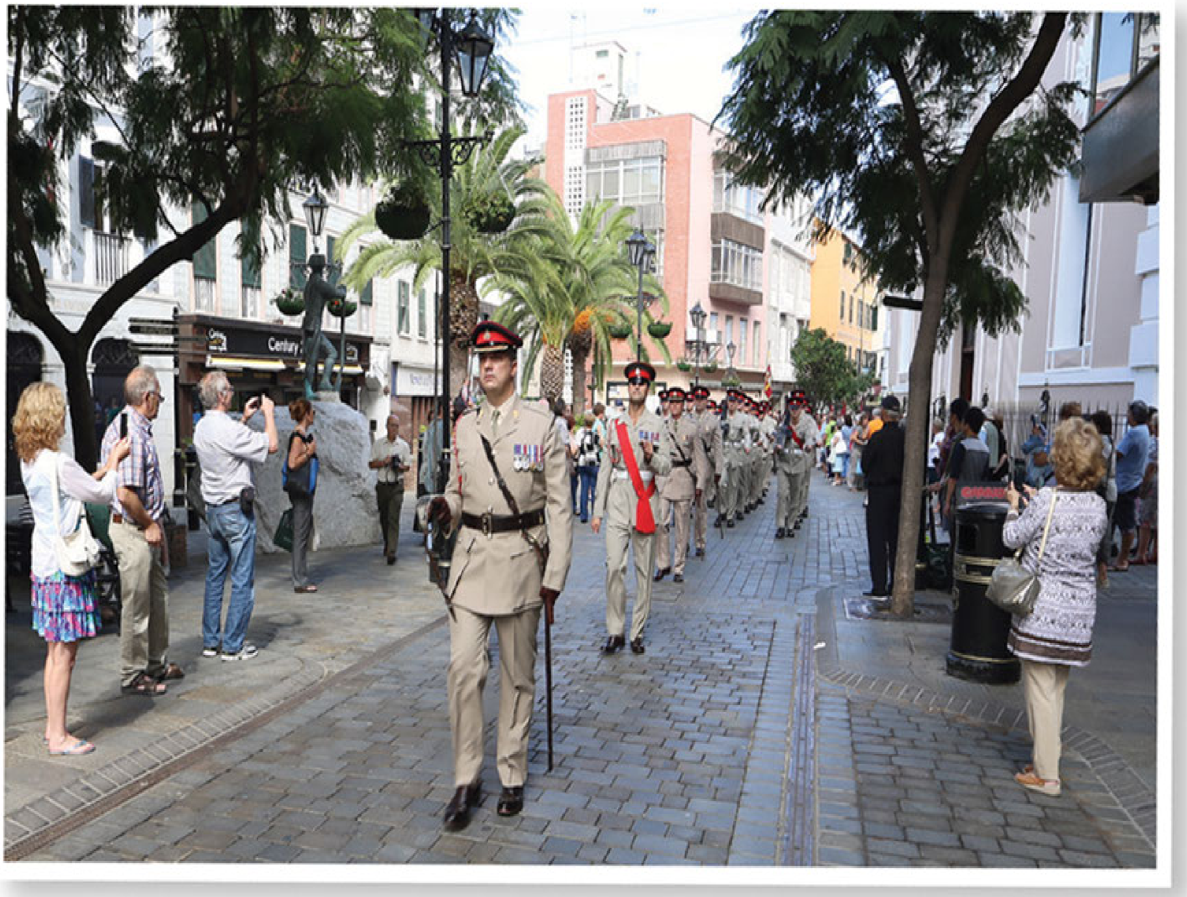
Pipes and Drums, 75th anniversary concert.

The magnificent concert hall that is St Michael's Cave, 75th anniversary concert.

The unrivalled experience of a dinner in St Michael's Cave. Dining-out of the former CO, Lieutenant-Colonel Perez in 2010. High-quality food as always!

THE ROYAL GIBRALTAR REGIMENT NOW AND IN THE FUTURE: AN OUTLOOK

The book ends with the 75th anniversary of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment and its preceding formations in 2014. However, the story of the Regiment has continued since then and will continue in the future. As the resident battalion in Gibraltar, the Regiment has a unique position within the British Army. Its roles and responsibilities are not restricted to that of a standard infantry unit, but it has responsibility for additional and challenging roles and tasks. Thus, since 2011, it assumed all bomb disposal responsibilities in Gibraltar, the only infantry unit in the British Army to have such a role. In November 2011 Permanent Joint Headquarters in the UK conducted a review of the Regiment. The review recommended that more should be done by the wider Army and the armed forces to exploit the Regiment's capabilities, location, cultural background and skills set, in particular to support Africa-based defence consultancy tasks. This was in line with the new 'Army 2020' concept which paved the way for the Army's future structure and outlook. Army 2020 redefined the purpose of the Army, which is to be capable of contingent capability for deterrence and defence, overseas engagement and capacity building, civil engagement and the military contribution to homeland resilience. It is clear that the Royal Gibraltar Regiment is able to play an outstanding role in all of these areas. The regiment has come a long way from its humble beginnings as the Gibraltar Volunteer Corps, but the love and dedication to the Rock has not changed.



Lieutenant-Colonel Ivor Lopez leading the Regiment up Main Street, 75th anniversary parade.

The Colours are marched past the Convent, with the Governor and the Chief Minister paying their respects.

The Regiment in Casemates Square at the 75th anniversary celebration, 2014.

In 2014, the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Ivor Lopez said that the next 75 years of the Regiment will be about making sure that the Regiment is ready to meet the current and any future tasks. The CO stated ‘I believe today we are in very strong place and we must continue to deliver as a forward mounting base – that is our bread and butter. We must also continue to support the wider military interests overseas as we have always done’. All this could not be achieved without the continuing support from the local population, but Lieutenant-Colonel Lopez is convinced that this support is guaranteed: ‘There is a lot of connection with the community with parents and grandparents who may have served and done the national service, and some of whom may also have served during World War Two. They see us as a family regiment.'

In 2009 Lieutenant-Colonel Perez summed up perfectly what the Regiment is all about and what will matter in the future:

Since re-roling as an infantry regiment in 1991 our soldiers have served in every major operation conducted by UK forces: Desert Storm, Northern Ireland, all of the Balkan conflicts, Sierra Leone, Iraq and Afghanistan. Our training has taken us to five continents. We do not lose sight, though, of our core tasks: despite our breadth of experience our foremost operational commitment is to ensure the security of Gibraltar.

With this in mind, the regimental motto will hold true also for the next 75 years:

Nulli Expugnabilis Hosti.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ivor Lopez, Commanding Officer at the time of the 75th anniversary.

APPENDICES

NULLI EXPUGNABILIS HOSTI

GOVERNORS OF GIBRALTAR

1704	Prince George Hesse Darmstadt
1704	Major-General Henry Nugent, Conde de Valdesoto
1704	Major-General John Shrimpton
1707	Brigadier General Roger Elliott
1711	Brigadier General Thomas Stanwix
1713	General Sir David Colyear, the Earl of Portmore

1730	Lieutenant-General Joseph Sabine
1739	Lieutenant-General Jasper Clayton
1742	Major-General William Hargrave
1749	Lieutenant-General Humphrey Bland
1756	Major-General Thomas Fowke
1756	Lieutenant-General James O’Hara, the Lord Tyrawley
1757	Major-General William Home, the Earl of Home
1761	Lieutenant-General The Honourable Edward Cornwallis
1777	Lieutenant-General George Augustus Eliott
1790	Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Boyd
1794	General Sir Henry Clinton
1795	Lieutenant-General Charles O’Hara
1802	General HRH Prince Edward The Duke of Kent
1820	General Sir John Pitt, the Earl of Chatham
1836	Major-General Sir Alexander Wood Ford
1842	General Sir Robert Wilson
1848	Major-General Sir Robert Gardiner
1855	Lieutenant-General Sir James Fergusson
1859	Lieutenant-General Sir William Codrington
1865	Lieutenant-General Sir Richard Airey
1870	General Sir William F Williams of Kars
1876	General the Rt Hon Robert Cornellis, Baron the Lord Napier of Magdala
1883	General Sir John Ayde
1886	General The Hon Sir Arthur Hardinge
1890	General The Hon Sir Leicester Smyth
1891	General Sir Lothian Nicholson
1893	General Sir Robert Biddulph
1900	Lieutenant-General Sir George White
1905	General Sir Frederick W. E. F. Forestier-Walker
1910	General Sir Archibald Hunter
1913	Lieutenant-General Sir Herbert Miles
1918	General Sir Horace L. Smith-Dorrien
1923	General Sir Charles C. Munro
1928	General Sir Alexander J. Godley
1933	General Sir Charles H. Harrington

1938	General Sir Edmund Ironside
1939	Lieutenant-General Sir Clive Liddell
1941	General The Viscount Gort
1942	Major-General Sir F. Noel Mason MacFarlane
1944	Lieutenant-General Sir T. Ralph Eastwood
1947	Lieutenant-General Sir Kenneth Anderson
1952	Lieutenant-General Sir Gordon MacMillan
1955	Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Redman
1958	General Sir Charles Keightley
1962	General Sir Dudley Ward
1965	General Sir Gerald Lathbury
1969	Admiral of the Fleet Sir Varyl Begg
1973	Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir John Grandy
1978	General Sir William Jackson
1982	Admiral Sir David Williams
1985	Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Terry
1989	Admiral Sir Derek Roy Reffell
1993	Field Marshal Sir John Chapple
1995	Admiral Sir Hugo White
1997	The Rt Hon Sir Richard Luce
2000	The Hon Sir David Durie
2003	Sir Francis Neville Richards
2006	Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Henry Gervase Fulton
2009	Vice Admiral Sir Adrian James Johns
2013	Lieutenant-General Sir James Dutton

HONORARY COLONELS OF THE REGIMENT

1956–68	W. Thomson
1968–75	C. Norton
1975–80	J Gareze
1980–85	J. Porral
1985–89	A. Ferrary
1989–93	D. Collado
1993–98	R. Peliza
1998–2003	J. Porral
2003–08	E. Guerrero
2008–14	D. Duarte
2014–	E. Britto

OFFICERS COMMANDING/COMMANDING OFFICERS

OFFICER COMMANDING

1915–16	Major G. B. Roberts RE	Gibraltar Volunteer Corps
1916	Major Bright RA	Gibraltar Volunteer Corps
1939–41	Major Sir Thomas L. H. Bart RA	Gibraltar Defence Force
1941–43	Major W. Thomson MA	Gibraltar Defence Force
1943–58	Major C. A. Norton	Gibraltar Defence Force

COMMANDING OFFICER

1958–65	Lieutenant-Colonel C. A. Norton MBE ED Gibraltar Regiment
1965–69	Lieutenant-Colonel J. M. E. Gareze OBE ED JP Gibraltar Regiment
1969–72	Lieutenant-Colonel J. J. Porral OBE ED JP Gibraltar Regiment
1972–75	Lieutenant-Colonel A. J. Ferrary OBE ED Gibraltar Regiment
1975–82	Lieutenant-Colonel D. L. Collado OBE Gibraltar Regiment
1982–85	Lieutenant-Colonel E. M. Britto OBE ED Gibraltar Regiment
1985–91	Lieutenant-Colonel E. Guerrero OBE Gibraltar Regiment
1991–93	Lieutenant-Colonel D. L. Hooper OBE Gibraltar Regiment
1993–98	Lieutenant-Colonel D. Duarte OBE Gibraltar Regiment
1998–99	Lieutenant-Colonel F. Brancato OBE Gibraltar Regiment
1999–2003	Lieutenant-Colonel F. Brancato OBE Royal Gibraltar Regiment
2003–06	Lieutenant-Colonel M. Randall
2006–09	Lieutenant-Colonel J. Perez MBE Royal Gibraltar Regiment
2009–13	Lieutenant-Colonel C. Risso MC Royal Gibraltar Regiment
2013–	Lieutenant-Colonel I. Lopez Royal Gibraltar Regiment

HONORARY AIDES-DE-CAMP AND AIDES-DE-CAMP

HONORARY AIDE-DE-CAMP

1963–68	Captain C. A. Munford
1968–71	Captain C. R. Howes
1971–73	Captain C. A. Canessa
1973–76	Captain E. M. Britto
1976–79	Captain A. M. Rugeroni
1979–83	Captain W. G. Carboni Jardim
1983–86	Captain C. A. Armstrong
1986–91	Captain P. H. Canessa
1992	Captain F. L. Galliano
1992–96	Captain P. X. Canessa
1996–97	Captain D. Collado

AIDE-DE-CAMP

1997–99	Captain A. W. Bonfante
1999–2000	Captain C. A. Risso
2000–01	Captain A. F. J. O’Shea
2001–03	Captain I. S. Lopez
2003–04	Captain D. A. McComb
2004–07	Captain G. J. Flower
2007–09	Captain J. Williamson
2009–10	Captain T. Cumming
2010–11	Captain J. Allan
2011–12	Captain C. Bonfante
2012–13	Captain D. Pozo
2013–	Captain F. J. Pitto

REGIMENTAL SERGEANT MAJOR

1958–59	Warrant Officer Class 2 R. Baye Royal Artillery
1959–60	Warrant Officer Class 1 J. Prior Lancashire Fusiliers
1960–63	Warrant Officer Class 1 P. J. Reynolds Royal Northumberland Fusiliers
1963–66	Warrant Officer Class 1 A. Morris Somerset and Cornwall Light Infantry
1966–69	Warrant Officer Class 1 R. L. Marsh MBE Duke of Edinburgh’s Royal Regiment
1969–70	Warrant Officer Class 1 G. Veitch Royal Anglian Regiment
1970–73	Warrant Officer Class 1 A. Willis Royal Regiment of Fusiliers
1973–75	Warrant Officer Class 1 T. H. Finn Royal Anglian Regiment
1975–81	Warrant Officer Class 1 R. Randall Gibraltar Regiment
1981–82	Warrant Officer Class 1 J. D. Ritchie Gibraltar Regiment
1982–86	Warrant Officer Class 1 J. Sanders Gibraltar Regiment
1986–91	Warrant Officer Class 1 L. H. Lopez MBE Gibraltar Regiment
1991–94	Warrant Officer Class 1 F. E. Sanchez Gibraltar Regiment
1994–96	Warrant Officer Class 1 C. Buttigieg Gibraltar Regiment
1996–99	Warrant Officer Class 1 E. W. Bradley MBE Highlanders

1999–2001	Warrant Officer Class 1 S. Aitken Parachute Regiment
2001–02	Warrant Officer Class 1 E. Asquez Gibraltar Regiment
2002–05	Warrant Officer Class 1 S. Victory Gibraltar Regiment
2005–07	Warrant Officer Class 1 S. A. Bensadon Royal Gibraltar Regiment
2007–09	Warrant Officer Class 1 G. P. Fitzgerald Royal Gibraltar Regiment
2009–12	Warrant Officer Class 1 J. P. Payas Royal Gibraltar Regiment
2012–14	Warrant Officer Class 1 A. R. Stone Royal Gibraltar Regiment
2014–	Warrant Officer Class 1 J. T. Valverde Royal Gibraltar Regiment

PORT SERGEANT

1978–82	Warrant Officer Class 2 J. H. Sanders
1982–85	Warrant Officer Class 2 I. Llamas
1985–89	Warrant Officer Class 2 A. M. Borg
1989–93	Colour Sergeant J. Moss
1993–96	Colour Sergeant E. Asquez
1996–98	Colour Sergeant S. Victory
1998–99	Colour Sergeant J. K. Fortunato
1999–2000	Colour Sergeant A. I. Berllaque
2000–02	Warrant Officer Class 2 D. L. Davis
2002–03	Warrant Officer Class 2 G. Fitzgerald
2003–07	Colour Sergeant F. Mauro
2007–09	Warrant Officer Class 2 D. G. F. Coleing
2009–10	Colour Sergeant D. Castrey
2010–12	Colour Sergeant C. Canepa
2012–14	Colour Sergeant S. Wood
2014–	Colour Sergeant M. Hitchcock

ALLIANCES OF THE REGIMENT

Royal Anglian Regiment	13 August 1968
HMS Calpe	24 September 1988
Royal Regiment of Artillery	16 October 1993
Corp of Royal Engineers	22 June 1996
Royal Irish Regiment	3 July 1999

IMAGE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NULLI EXPUGNABILIS HOSTI

The majority of the images used in this book came from the extensive archive that had been assembled over many years by John Ritchie and John Navas and which contains hundreds of images and photographs. Many of the images had been supplied by individuals or the Regiment itself and it was not always possible to identify the original sources of the images. Therefore, these images are seen as part of the collective Navas/Ritchie archive. As they form the majority of the images, they are not listed individually in the acknowledgments; this means that every image that is not listed below stems from this source.

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Dr Matthias Strohn was educated at the Universities of Münster (Germany) and Oxford. He has lectured at Oxford University and the Joint Services Command and Staff College at Shrivenham. Since 2006 he has been a lecturer in the Department of War Studies at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, and in 2011 he was also made a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Buckingham.

He holds a commission in the German army and is currently a member of the military attaché reserve.

He has published widely on 20th-century German and European military history and is an expert on the German army in the First World War and the inter-war period. He has advised British and German government bodies on the First World War centenary commemorations.

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Author's note

In order to open the book to a wide audience and not to deter the non-military reader the use of military jargon has been kept to a minimum throughout the book, and ranks have not been abbreviated. The ranks and positions of people are given as at the time of the events described.

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